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ROMANCES OF THE PEERAGE

By
HORACE WYNDHAM

*“Oh for the gentleness of old Romance,
The simple plaining of a minstrel’s song!”*

KEATS

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Romances paint at full length people's wooings,
But only give a bust of marriages ;
For no-one cares for matrimonial cooings ;
There's nothing wrong in a connubial kiss ;
Think you, if Laura had been Petrarch's wife,
He would have written sonnets all his life ?

Don Juan

ASPECTS OF ROMANCE

Happenings of the Past

ASPECTS OF ROMANCE

HAPPENINGS OF THE PAST

I

“THE romances of our great families,” says Sir Bernard Burke, in a typically verbose and inflated passage, “exhibit details of the most stirring and remarkable character, throwing light on the principal occurrences of domestic annals and elucidating the most important national events . . . Let the reader seek romance in whatever book, and at whatever period he will, from Cervantes to Bulwer, yet naught will he find to surpass the uncommon and unexaggerated reality unfolded here—naught to convince him that the poetry of the brain can rival in interest the pages of British family history.”

It seems a large order. Still, it is none the less a fact that, enshrined in the records of some of the most illustrious houses, are depths of passion and pathos and intrigue that the wildest flights of imagination cannot hope to equal.

Take, for example, the astonishing career of the sixth Earl of Aberdeen. If set out as fiction it would be considered incredible. Thus, reared in the “lap of luxury,” heir to a great position and fortune, of a refined and markedly religious temperament, and devoted to his mother, Lord Aberdeen voluntarily renounced all his advantages, and, under an assumed name, lived the hard life of a seaman in the American mercantile marine. He could have abandoned it at any moment and resumed his proper place in society. Yet he did not do so; and every rebuff and discomfort that befell him merely strengthened his resolve. But perhaps the oddest and most inexplicable point of all is that, while he kept up an affectionate correspondence with them, he studiously

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concealed from his relatives both his address and the name he had adopted.

Other outstanding examples that support Sir Bernard Burke's contention are offered in the misadventures of James Annesley ("The Unfortunate Young Nobleman"), whose history formed the plot of *Guy Mannering*; the odd combination of matrimonial enterprise and missionary zeal exhibited by the Earl of Stamford and Lord Congleton; the mad "plunging" of the Marquis of Hastings; the long-sustained concealment of his marriage by Viscount Bolingbroke; the disputed claim to the Earldom of Wicklow; and the meteoric rise to power (and subsequent fall from it) of Baron Ward.

2

What exactly is implied by the term "romance"? One is given a choice of so many meanings. The average dictionary definition is "an extravagant narrative which passes beyond the limits of real life, any fictitious and wonderful tale." Then there are also numerous subsidiary definitions, ranging from, "French, or any of the tongues in southern Europe derived from Latin," to "a verse or prose tale embodying the adventures of some hero of chivalry." Disraeli, who certainly knew something about it, called romance "the offspring of fiction and love." This, at any rate, will pass. Yet, the commonest definition, i.e., "love interest," seems the most applicable. As such it is to be found often enough in a bundle of yellowing letters, a length of faded ribbon, a withered flower, a scrap of paper in a secret drawer of an old cabinet. They all touch a chord to which every heart is responsive.

"Romance," however, is a label that is loosely applied to almost anything. It threatens to become nearly as overworked an expression as "dramatic." Thus, we have the "romance" of adventure, of history, of politics, and of travel. James Grant refers to the "romance of war"; Locke to the "romance of physic"; and Drummond

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to the "romance of science." A claim is also submitted for the "romance of business," supported by selected examples of modern Dick Whittingtons, who, arriving in London with half a crown (and cat complete), finish up in the Lord Mayor's chair at the Mansion House. Then, too, there is a distinct touch of this quality in the average maritime insurance policy, with its allusions to such glamorous happenings as the encountering of "pirates, rovers, and detainments by kings, princes and peoples."

There is certainly a "romance of wealth"; and accomplished travellers still go from log cabins to white (and other-coloured) houses. In this connection it is interesting to remember that the Portman family owe their millions to the action of a far-sighted ancestor, who, wanting a convenient place in which to pasture some asses, purchased several fields in Marylebone. Other aristocratic houses have had asses among their members; but their existence has not always led to the acquisition of wealth. As a matter of fact, it has more often led to the Bankruptcy Court.

3

While they certainly play their part in it, romance is not necessarily restricted to abductions and seductions; to elopements and the pealing of wedding-bells; to breathless adventures by flood and field; to sword-flashing and pistol-play; to pursuit and capture; and to stories of long-lost heirs (and heiresses) and the discovery of missing wills.

There is no recognised road to romance. At any rate, if there is one, it has not yet been mapped or charted. Romance may be waiting round the corner for all of us. It cuts a wide swath, touching heights and depths and great spaces with tragedy and comedy, gladness and sadness, worldly wisdom and human follies all within its borders. It is also held to be associated with places. The most unlikely places, some of

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them. Thus, a still popular anecdote declares that a young woman, by simply dropping a pile of books at his feet, once made the acquaintance of a fellow-worker in the reading-room of the British Museum, and eventually accompanied him to the altar. As a result, the more serious students in that haunt of literature had their researches interrupted for weeks afterwards by a barrage of book-dropping.

But romance occurs in all sorts of unexpected places. It once occurred in a Dublin hat shop. A horseman, riding past the door, slipped on the cobbles and was thrown unconscious to the ground. Thereupon the hatter, with true Irish hospitality, had the injured man carried into his premises above the shop, where he was nursed back to health by his daughter, Mary. The hatter was Benjamin Mee; and the stranger was Henry, second Viscount Palmerston. When he had recovered sufficiently from his injuries to leave Dublin it was as the affianced husband of Mary Mee. In 1783 he married her at Bath; and their son, Henry Temple, was, later on, to become Prime Minister of England and to be buried in Westminster Abbey.

Although romance has no territorial boundaries it is none the less a fact that Ireland has always made a specially rich contribution to this field. That Washington Irving should have immortalised the love story of Sarah Curran and Robert Emmet in one of the chapters of his *Sketch Book* is not astonishing, for it stands out as an exemplar for all time of a woman's fondness and faith enduring to the tomb. Similarly, in the *Colleen Bawn* the dramatist has served up the moving tale of poor Ellen Hanley, who "found too soon that men betray," and was brutally done to death at the instigation of her husband. The pathetic history of Pamela Fitzgerald, too, against whom the dice were loaded from the start, has furnished a setting for many subsequent dramas and novels.

"I never heard of a peer with an ancient lineage. The real old families of this country are to be found among

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the peasantry. The gentry, too, may lay some claim to old blood. . . But a peer with an ancient lineage is to me quite a novelty. No, no; the thirty years of the Wars of the Roses freed us from these gentlemen."

This was not said by a modern Communist from the Clydebank. It was said by a character in one of Lord Beaconsfield's novels. Of course, it is audacious and far-fetched. Still, there is, none the less, just a measure of truth in it; and, despite the vaunted blueness of their blood, the ancestry of even the oldest nobility is much more nearly allied with that of the money-grubbers than with that of the Crusaders.

4

"Of what avail is blood or rank"? was the sneering question put by Juvenal. Certainly, it has not always protected its possessors from hard knocks and buffets. Patricians, no less than plebeians, have had their ups and downs. Especially their "downs." The Wars of the Roses and the troublous years that followed them did much to lower the crests of once great families and humble them in the dust; and the scaffold took a heavy toll of many who survived the battlefield. Memorials of brass and marble, erected to perpetuate illustrious houses, have, with the passage of time, crumbled into nothingness. The truth of the matter is families fall as well as rise; and when they fall they are apt to fall far. As the pedigree-searchers know from experience, the stream of long descent has often flowed in obscure and unsuspected channels; and the undoubted heirs to historic names and once lofty positions have been discovered among artizans and peasants. This is because family trees, like other trees, are not always storm-proof. With the passage of time their branches wither and perish. A bona-fide Plantagenet has been found cobbling boots in a Welsh village; and less than fifty years ago a lineal descendant of Edward III was employed as a grave digger in London. Similar genealogical vicissitudes are

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common in Scotland and Ireland, where pathetic examples are to hand of broken fortunes and scattered families.

But families which are distinguished, although not perhaps aristocratic, also disappear. Thus, one may look in vain for a representative in the direct male line of Chaucer, Cromwell, Hampden, Johnson, or Milton and a host of others. Where this matter is concerned an amateur genealogist wrote to a newspaper in November 1829, declaring that "he had just had the happiness of rescuing from the depths of poverty a meritorious young female who proved to be the last descendant of William Shakespeare, the daughter of a poor woman at Leamington." He omitted, however—the writers of "Letters to the Editor" always leave out something—to say what sort of "proof" he had of the lady's ancestry.

Yet, although all traces of living descendants may be lost, or at any rate unrecorded among the parchments at the Heralds' College, a family cannot die out entirely. Even when, for want of an acceptable claimant, a peerage has fallen into abeyance it is practically certain that a lawful heir exists somewhere. He may be a mechanic or a labourer, a clerk adding up figures in an office ledger, a shopman selling goods behind a counter, or even an out-of-work on the dole. But when peerages have become extinct it is often difficult to discover who it is that should be wearing the coronet, for the question frequently hinges on the ability of the claimant to prove to the satisfaction of the Committee for Privileges of the House of Lords that the eldest son who, in days long gone by, ran off with his sisters' governess or a good-looking kitchen wench really made the girl an "honest woman." These matters have to be proved up to the hilt, and a little bit beyond. There is no benefit of the doubt.

Nowadays the barrier that shuts off one section of society from another is a door, rather than a wall; and family trees, since developed into an aristocratic growth, have often sprung from very humble roots. Pliant genealogists, however, treat such beginnings with

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lordly indifference, and affect to discover the bluest of blood in the commonest of stock. Hence, the preamble of a “patent of nobility” or the florid inscription on a tombstone is not always to be accepted at its face value. “What are pedigrees worth?” enquires Professor Freeman, the distinguished historian. “When a pedigree professes to be traced back to the times of which I know most it is all but invariably false. As a rule it is not only false, but impossible. The historical circumstances, when any are introduced, are for the most part not merely fiction, but precisely that kind of fiction which is, in its beginnings, deliberate and interested falsehood.”

In bygone days the British Peerage, like the British Army, had its “purchase system”; and, if there is anything in rumour, it lasted longer. The Duke of York’s fair (but frail) “friend,” Mary Anne Clarke, had her predecessors; and the Countess of Yarmouth drove a brisk traffic in the sale of “honours,” the elevation in 1747 of Viscount Folkestone from a mere baronetcy costing his lordship a cool £12,000. As things went, this was moderate, for the customary tariff was much higher.

As was the fashion of the period, Walpole turned corruption to account; Pitt, following suit, distributed coronets right and left, as a cheap and effective bribe (“he made lords where he could not make gentlemen”); and both George III and George IV stooped to securing the homage of wealthy and pushful plebeians by “ennobling” them. To-day the offspring of these “paladins of high finance”—as they were dubbed by Disraeli—are entrenched among the governing classes. But the possession of wealth has not in itself always led to social advancement. There are other contributory factors. Thus, the licentious amours of Charles II brought three dukedoms into existence; and less than a hundred years ago an earldom was created for a son of William IV and his paramour, Mrs. Jordan. Similarly, there are members of the peerage who have sprung from the intrigues of the flunkeys of Dutch William; a forbear of the Duke of Devonshire was a domestic

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servant in the employ of Cardinal Wolsey; the Duke of Bedford's ancestry includes a fishmonger; the great grandfather of a Duke of Leeds began his career as a draper's apprentice; and the descendant of a lad behind the counter of a druggist's shop blossomed into the Duke of Northumberland, and shed his plebeian patronymic of Smithson for the aristocratic one of Percy.

It was with these examples (and many others that could be cited) before him that Disraeli once wrote: "The British Peerage, in its haughty and insolent exclusiveness, regards itself as a caste apart, infinitely removed from the rest of humanity, wilfully blind to the fact that it owes to a large extent its very existence to apprentice boys who have served behind city counters, and whose blood mingles in its veins with that of the Percies and the Howards."

There is an odd doctrine (held by shallow thinkers) of "human equality." It is founded on nothing substantial. Men may be equal in death (although no sort of proof to this effect is forthcoming), but they are certainly not equal in life. One man goes to a palace, another to a prison. Environment, acquired characteristics, and inherited traits, and, of course, sheer luck, are all contributory factors in human development.

Men rise on stepping-stones thoughtfully put in their path by others. While it is certainly a help, it is not really necessary to be born in the purple. A club waiter once ended his career as Governor of Madras; an ex-publican, who added pugilism and bookmaking to his other activities, became a Member of Parliament; and powder-monkeys and drummer-boys (but not many of them) have developed into admirals and field-marshals. Then, too, take the amazing record of Thomas Ward, who, beginning life as a Yorkshire village boy, ended it, when still under fifty, wearing the coat of an ambassador and the coronet of a baron.

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Where history is concerned it is always interesting to examine first causes. Had Lady Sarah Bunbury, born Lady Sarah Lennox, been gifted with a more philosophic temperament, she would not have left a husband for a lover; and, if she had not done so, there would have been no Sir Charles Napier to add Scinde to the British Empire.

The theory, perhaps, sounds somewhat far-fetched. Still, it is supported by the facts.

It is a matter of common knowledge that Lady Sarah Lennox, daughter of the second Duke of Richmond, could—had she elected to do so—have become the consort of George III. His Majesty was “head over ears” in love with her. “They want me,” he said to her confidante, Lady Susan Strangways, “to have a foreign queen, but I prefer an English one. Tell your friend from me that I think she is the fittest person in all the world to be my wife.”

The message was duly delivered, but its recipient was not sufficiently dazzled by the prospect of occupying a throne to give her hand without her heart. “Luckily for me,” she wrote to Lady Susan, when the King selected somebody else for the honour, “I did not love him, and only liked; nor did the title weigh anything with me.”

It was certainly a lucky escape; and Charlotte Sophia, Princess of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, whom the Privy Council considered a more suitable match for His Majesty, had to put up with a husband who was to die an imbecile.

With her dazzling beauty and distinguished lineage, Lady Sarah Lennox attracted many wooers. She is said at one time to have been in love with the Marquis of Lothian; and Horace Walpole tells us that she refused an offer from Lord Erroll. The man she eventually married was a sporting baronet, Sir Charles Bunbury, M.P., of Barton Hall, Newmarket, who is better remem-

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bered nowadays as the owner of *Diomed*, the first Derby winner. It seemed, on the face of it, an ideal match. "Who the Devil," wrote the young bride to her friend, Lady Susan, "would not be happy with a pretty place, a good house, greyhounds, etc., for hunting, so near Newmarket, what company we please in the house, and two thousand a year to spend?"

But, despite all these material advantages, Lady Sarah was not "happy" with her husband. The two had different interests. Sir Charles was immersed in his racing-stable, and his young wife in her cousin, Lord William Gordon. The *liaison* between the pair developed to such a degree that in 1769, five years after her marriage, Lady Sarah, counting the world well lost for love, left Sir Charles and went off with Lord William to Earlstone, in Berwickshire. "Here, on the banks of the Leader," says a biographer, "there is yet a path called the 'Lovers' Walk,' in memory of this lord and his lady fair; while in close proximity to the house two thorn trees planted by the amorous couple still entwine stems and branches, as though to commemorate the transient passion which had its sequel in an undefended divorce suit."

The injured husband secured his release by a special Act of Parliament; and Lady Sarah then married, not, as everybody expected, her cousin, but Colonel the Hon. George Napier. Although her father, the Duke of Richmond, and the other members of her family opposed it vigorously, the marriage turned out very well. Of the five sons born to Lady Sarah and Colonel Napier, one, the eldest, Charles, lived to be the conqueror of Scinde, and another, William, to be the historian of the Peninsular War.

The marriage of Lady Sarah Cadogan, the mother of Lady Sarah Lennox, was attended by even more remarkable circumstances. The story goes that, to cancel a gambling debt between her father (Marlborough's favourite general) and the first Duke of Richmond, she, being a considerable heiress, was betrothed to the Duke's eldest son, the Earl of March. The bridegroom

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was a lad of seventeen and the bride was still in the schoolroom. Nor did their parents, following the fashion of the period, consult them on the subject.

(“Have I really got to marry that dowdy?” enquired Lord March; and “I don’t want to be married at all,” announced Lady Sarah). But tears and protests were unavailing. As soon as a subservient chaplain had gabbled over the ceremony, Lady Sarah returned to her governess and the young husband was packed off to the Continent with a tutor.

After an absence of three years, during which interval the couple neither saw nor wrote to one another, Lord March returned to England. On the night of his arrival he chanced to visit the Opera. Happening to notice a very beautiful young woman in a box, he enquired her name. “She is the Countess of March,” was the unexpected answer. Thereupon her husband, feeling that they had been separated long enough, hurried off to the box and introduced himself to its occupant. It was a case of “journeys end in lovers’ meeting”; and for thirty years they lived together in the greatest happiness. On the death of the Duke of Richmond (as Lord March had become in 1723) his widow was so grief-stricken that she is said to have died of a broken heart within twelve months.

6

The matrimonial activities of a peer of the realm are always apt (so long as the hereditary principle is in force) to have far-reaching consequences. This was certainly the case with regard to the eighth Earl of Stamford, whose third adventure in matrimony might well have led to a curious and not altogether welcome situation.

Lord Stamford, who was a son of the Rev. Harry Grey, a kinsman of the seventh Earl, was also in Holy Orders. A firm believer in the doctrine that it was “not good for man to live alone,” he had been married

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twice. On becoming a widower for the second time he accepted a "call" and left England. It was a distant one, since it took him to South Africa. During his sojourn on the veld he enjoyed the fullest respect of his scattered flock, and was indefatigable in his ministrations on their behalf. His relatives in England, however (to which country he did not return when he succeeded to the peerage, on the death of his cousin), felt that he was carrying the spirit of missionary zeal further than circumstances required when, in the year 1880, he led one of his fair converts to the altar. They took this view because Miss Martha Solomon, the lady on whom his third choice had fallen, was not really very fair. As it happened, she could scarcely have been anything else, since her father was a Transvaal Boer, with a Hottentot strain in his ancestry, and her mother was a full-blooded Kaffir. Hence, when, after a suitable interval, it became apparent that the Countess was on the point of adding maternity to her other dusky charms, much anxious discussion arose as to the sex of the anticipated arrival. If it happened to be a boy, there was the fact to be faced that a "coloured gentleman" would one day sit as an hereditary legislator in the House of Lords.

It is said that Queen Victoria was so disturbed at the idea that she consulted the Cabinet as to how such a possibility could be avoided. They could, however, offer no solution. Fortunately, Nature herself supplied one, since the infant happened to be a girl. As no son was born, the earldom, on the death of Lord Stamford in 1890, devolved upon his nephew, and an embarrassing situation was thus averted. As for the widowed Countess, she had the good sense to drop her title when she remarried a couple of years later.

Romantic happenings are no preserve of wealthy patricians. They crop up among what have been called "the short and simple scandals of the poor." Mile End is on a level in this respect with Mayfair; and St. Giles's with St. James's. Still, one hears less of them. Their "news value," it would seem, is not so good. Yet it has

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happened more than once that girls born of poor (but not conspicuously honest) parents have mated with the peerage; and such unions have not always turned out unhappily. There is no rule on the subject. A successful marriage was certainly that of Viscount Bolingbroke, who chose for his second wife Mary Howard, said to be the daughter of a blacksmith.

As an outstanding example of what can be done in this direction there is a stock tale of a country lass who, with nothing but a willing heart and a pair of strong arms, once arrived in London to seek employment. After much difficulty (domestic servants being less scarce then than now), she secured a job to wash beer barrels. She washed them so well that after an interval the publican promoted her to the position of barmaid, and eventually to that of his wife. On becoming a widow, with a handsome jointure and the ownership of the beerhouse, she married an ambitious young barrister. The barrister was Edward Hyde, the future Lord Chancellor and Earl of Clarendon. Their daughter Anne became the wife of the Duke of York, and the mother of the Princesses Mary and Anne, each afterwards Queen of England.

It is a good enough story. Unfortunately, however, there is not a word of truth in it.

What, however, is true, is that a Countess has married a groom. It was a long time ago, certainly, for the date was 1745. The lady was Susanna, widow of the sixth Earl of Strathmore, and her second husband was George Forbes, a youth employed in her stables, and several years younger than herself.

Naturally, there was much newspaper comment when the episode leaked out:

“Some most remarkable nuptials,” declared an inspired paragraphist, “were performed this month at Castle Lyon, when Susanna, the far-famed beauty of Strathmore, married Mr. Forbes, one of the menservants in her employ . . . There are rumours that the lady’s example

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may be followed in other directions; and that an embarrassing ambition appears rife among the servitors in several of our great families. It would seem as if many grooms of superior appearance were like to lose their employment, being suspected of aspirations not altogether agreeable to the heads of families who have attractive daughters. We shall watch the result with interest."

As might have been imagined, the union was as unhappy as it was ill-assorted. At any rate, the Countess, after giving birth to a girl, left her husband and died in poverty in a Paris garret.

Matrimonial history, like other history, has a knack of repeating itself. In much more modern times an earl's widow, the Countess of Ravensworth, married (as her third choice) her coachman. A daring experiment. Still, it answered well enough, for the ex-coachman "knew his place," and kept it. In this respect he certainly showed better feeling than did a popular jockey to whom a sporting and widowed dowager is said to have proposed matrimony. Calling on the family solicitor, he enquired point blank: "If I marry the Duchess, shall I be a Duke?"

As was perhaps inevitable, the provisions of the Royal Marriage Act of 1772 have led to much difference of opinion among the genealogists. Also to domestic trouble. A notable instance was that furnished by the matrimonial adventures of Prince Augustus Frederick (afterwards Duke of Sussex), sixth son of George III. In the year 1793 he happened to be wintering in Italy. There, possibly because he found time hanging somewhat heavily on his hands, he proposed to, and was accepted by, Lady Augusta Murray, daughter of the Earl of Dunmore. Fully aware that the union (if only for the reason that he was still under age) would not commend itself to the King, he did not trouble to ask

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him for his sanction, but had the marriage ceremony performed in Rome. It was a somewhat hole-and-corner one, as there were no witnesses to it, and the bride's parents were kept in the dark. Accordingly, on returning to England with his wife, the Prince voluntarily went through the ceremony again; this time at St. George's, Hanover Square.

This second ceremony, however, was also a little "irregular," as the couple described themselves on the certificate as "Augustus Frederick, condition bachelor, and Augusta Murray, condition spinster." The Rev. Mr. Gunn, the curate who tied the knot, seems to have been an innocent party to the deception.

Considering that it was then too late for any interference to be effective, the Prince broke the news to his father. He was soon to learn his error, for the King set the machinery of the Prerogative Court at work and had the marriage annulled. Lady Augusta, however, feeling *de facto*, if not *de jure*, his lawful wife, had (after the lapse of a suitable interval) no qualms about presenting the Prince with a couple of children.

Although George III (who had his own views on birth control for his family, if not for himself) was undoubtedly within his strict rights in thus having the marriage declared invalid, he none the less subjected Lady Augusta and her offspring to considerable hardship. Their paternity not being officially recognised, these children, a son and a daughter, adopted the surname of D'Este. When, in 1843, the Duke of Sussex (as Prince Augustus had become in 1801) was gathered to his fathers, a fresh complication arose, for his son endeavoured to be acknowledged a peer of the realm, with a seat in the House of Lords. The petition was rejected, but he was fobbed off with a knighthood.

On the death, in 1830, of Lady Augusta, the Duke of Sussex promptly took another partner. Having, as before, liberal views, and preferring to be unfettered in his choice, he attached no importance to the cramping provisions of the Royal Marriage Act. This time his

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bride was Lady Cecilia Underwood, daughter of the Earl of Arran. She also happened to be a widow, her first husband having been Sir George Buggin. This name, however, not appealing to her, she had, by royal licence, assumed in its place the more mellifluous one of Underwood. Although accepted by society as the Duke's wife, her position was a little equivocal, since her marriage to him was just as invalid as had been his previous one to Lady Augusta Murray. In 1840, however, Queen Victoria, "with that sense of propriety which so pre-eminently distinguished her in all matters touching upon domestic life, put an end to Lady Cecilia's anomalous position by raising her to the peerage as Duchess of Inverness."

The last morganatic marriage in England was solemnised in 1840, when the Duke of Cambridge, cousin of Queen Victoria, insisted on marrying the attractive and accomplished young actress, Miss Louisa Fairbrother, in preference to any of the foreign princesses selected for him by the matchmakers. In obeying the dictates of his heart the Duke showed his wisdom, since the union was a very happy one, even if the bride could not share her husband's rank, and had to live as Mrs. FitzGeorge.

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Although the Duke of Cambridge was the first member of the Royal Family to select a wife from the stage, he was by no means the first member of the peerage to adopt such a course. An example had been set long before this by Dukes of Bolton and St. Alban's, as well as by the Earls of Craven, Essex, Harrington, and Peterborough. Since then the practice has found so many adherents that it has now almost come to be regarded as the normal one. There is much to commend it.

Whatever may be said against it (and a good deal is said by some people), certain eugenic advantages to posterity have undoubtedly been derived from this custom



TENTH COUNTESS OF WESTMORLAND

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of sharing coronets with chorus ladies. This is because, while it may be blue in colour, the blood of the old nobility is apt to be decidedly anæmic in quality. Consequently, it is all the better for a strong infusion of red corpuscles from the big-bosomed, round-limbed, healthy young women of the stage-world who can supply this. Also, they contribute a valuable quota of good looks and intelligence to a stock that is often markedly wanting in these respects.

But actresses have not always jumped at the prospect of marrying youthful sprigs of nobility. When, for instance, Miss O'Neill received a "decided offer" from Lord Normanby, who happened to be under age at the time, she sent the letter embodying it to his father. Instead of being grateful to her for adopting this rigidly correct attitude, his lordship "returned a very coarse and furious answer, threatening to disinherit his son if he persisted, and to cast him off altogether." But Miss O'Neill was well out of it, for she afterwards made a much more suitable match in becoming the wife of Sir William Becher, an Irish baronet.

Still, it does not seem to be a case of "honours easy," for there is no established record of the positions being reversed, and a peeress marrying an actor. The nearest approach is offered by the example of a peer's daughter becoming the wife of a theatrical manager.

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Gretna Green is inseparably bound up with legends of runaway marriages; of fortune-hunting gallants; and of eloping daughters pursued by angry fathers, to the accompaniment of pistol shots and sword-play. There is also a tradition of a blacksmith and an anvil figuring in such ceremonies. But the historians, who upset everything, have upset even this tradition; and roundly declare that there never was a blacksmith and that there never was an anvil.

Perhaps they are right. Still, there certainly was a

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Gretna, with a long history of matrimonial joys and griefs and daring happenings. The oddest of happenings, too, some of them. Prominent among such is that of John Fane, tenth Earl of Westmorland, and Sarah Child, daughter and heiress of a wealthy banker of Temple Bar.

According to tradition, the young Earl, who, being in low financial water, had good reason to know that he would not be welcomed as a son-in-law, went to the father after dinner one night and put a supposititious case to him. "What should a man of spirit do," he enquired, "if he is not allowed to marry a girl whom he loves and who loves him?" "A man of spirit," said Mr. Child, mellowed with port, "would snap his fingers at the parents, and run away with the girl."

Lord Westmorland considered the suggestion so sound that he determined to adopt it. As a preliminary, on a summer evening in 1782 he had a carriage and four horses waiting at the corner of Berkeley Square. The signal having been made, Sarah Child stole out of her bedroom and threw herself into her lover's arms. The next moment the couple were dashing off, hell-for-leather, thundering along the Great North Road that was to lead them to happiness and Gretna. But, as luck would have it, a turnpike-man, suspecting that there was "something up," sent a message to Mr. Child. Thereupon the furious old gentleman, having discovered that his daughter was missing, left his moneybags and followed in a chaise with well-mounted servants and a brace of pistols. Drawing level with the eloping pair before half the journey was finished, he shot the leading horse. It looked as if capture were certain, when, in the darkness and confusion, one of the postilions ran back and cut the chaise's straps. As a result the lumbering vehicle broke down; and, by the time it had been adjusted, the fugitives had swept into Gretna. When the baffled father, securing a fresh vehicle, put in an appearance there he was too late for anything but storming, since the couple were now man and wife.

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A Gretna wedding would appear to have exercised a special fascination for future Lord Chancellors. At any rate, three occupants of the Woolsack (Brougham, Eldon, and Erskine) went through such a ceremony. Lord Eldon, who set the example in 1772, slipped off across the border and there plighted his troth to Elizabeth Surtees, his "dear Bessy." It was, after the natural opposition of a stern parent (for Eldon was then a penniless undergraduate) had been overcome, a very happy union and lasted for sixty years. Then there is the case of Lord Erskine, who was so fond of a Gretna marriage that he had two of them. The first was when he was a mere lad of twenty. The second was just on half a century later, at which time he was a widower with a grown up family. Sarah Buck, who accompanied him on this occasion, possessed a "past," of which the less said the better. Indeed, if Lord Erskine had considered strict propriety he would have put a ring on her finger much earlier, for the lady had already presented him with several pledges of affection.

Although the matter was common knowledge, the author of the fulsome obituary on Lord Erskine, which appeared in the *Scots Magazine*, does not seem to have heard of these little foibles. At any rate, he made no allusion to them. Other people, however, did so, for, the marriage turning out badly, the couple soon drifted apart; and on her husband's death in 1823 the widow fell on evil days.

Three years later, in the summer of 1826, this hurried trip to Gretna had a remarkable sequel at the Mansion House justice-room. "A shabbily-dressed female," says a paragraph in an evening journal, "who stood respectfully among the throng of petitioners, begged the worthy chief magistrate for his advice. Her late husband, with whom she candidly acknowledged having lived prior to marrying him, had, she declared, not only been a member of the House of Lords, but was none other than the celebrated Lord Erskine."

The Lord Mayor met this astonishing disclosure by inviting the applicant to see him in his private room.

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The interview that took place there, however, was not entirely "private," since a reporter was able to give the following account of it:

"In response to the questions that were put her, the visitor said that soon after the death of his first wife Lord Erskine became 'intimate' with her, under promise of marriage; and that three children, two boys and a girl, were the result of this intimacy. Lord Erskine, however, had subsequently married her at Gretna. Before his death he appointed the Earl of Rosslyn and Viscount Duncannon to act as trustees for these children, and also for another son happily born in wedlock. The two elder sons were provided for, but, as the mother had refused to be separated from the third and youngest, the trustees had stopped assisting her.

"Upon receiving his solemn assurance that full enquiry would be made by him of the solicitors and various gentlemen best acquainted with the affairs of her late distinguished husband, the widow, with tears in her eyes, expressed her gratitude to the Lord Mayor. After this the poor woman, whose conduct was unobtrusive in the extreme, then retired."

Touched by the account of her unhappy situation, as reported in the Press, the public sent the Lord Mayor several sums of money for her benefit. In acknowledging these gifts "it was remarked by his Lordship that the wretched condition to which the Lady of the late Lord Chancellor of England was reduced might be judged from the fact that she had first been brought to his official notice by a charitably-inclined chimney-sweep."

So far as the public could judge, Lord Erskine's widow had been very badly treated. Fuller enquiries, however, soon put another complexion on the matter, and showed that she had only herself to thank for her misfortune. The real truth was that, instead of being neglected by them, as she contended, her husband's family had gone out of their way to procure commissions for one son in the army and for another in the navy; and that the trustees had administered for her benefit

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a small fund from the Royal Bounty. It also appeared that the King had given her a special grant of £50 a year, and that Lord Rosslyn had voluntarily offered to increase this if she would agree to have her third son, a boy of ten, educated at Charterhouse; and it was not until she refused this offer that her allowance from Lord Rosslyn was temporarily stopped.

To put his principal right with the public, Lord Rosslyn's solicitor also sent a letter to the Press. In this he pointed out that "The Noble Earl, with the true urbanity of a gentleman, offered Lady Erskine at his own cost legal assistance to procure a legacy left her by her late Lord. This help has been insultingly and persistently declined. I myself," he added, "have taken particular pains to assist Lady Erskine, but she does not adhere strictly to the truth, and is, I regret to say, very ungrateful."

After this disclosure the stream of public benevolence came, as was perhaps only natural, to an abrupt stop.

"The melancholy example of the late Lord Erskine," says the rigid William Carpenter, "supplies one more proof, amongst a thousand others, of the folly and mischievousness of the system of hereditary peerages."

10

The glamour of Gretna as a back door to matrimony did not long survive; and the introduction of the railway and the telegraph administered the death blow. The first real shock, however, was dealt by Lord Brougham, who (although he had made one there himself as a young man) in 1856 sponsored a Bill to put an end to "irregular marriages." As a result, while couples can still be wedded at Gretna, it is imperative that one of the contracting parties shall have lived in the district for twenty-one days previously.

Perhaps the last elopement in "high life" was that of the Marquis of Anglesey. In 1810, when he was a married

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man, with a quiverful of three sons and five daughters, he eloped with Lady Charlotte Wellesley, the wife of a brother officer, and incidentally the mother of four children. It was not a good start. Also it developed badly, as he had to pay twenty-four thousand pounds damages to the injured husband (who brought an action against him for *crim con*), to fight a duel, and to figure in a couple of divorces.

These minor activities, however, did not damage his future prospects, as he lived to become a field-marshall; to have a monument erected to him during his lifetime, "in commemoration of his consummate skill and undaunted valour at Waterloo"; and to hold office as a Cabinet Minister and Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. Altogether a full career.

But a much more distinguished warrior than the Marquis of Anglesey also had his "romance." Several of them, if rumour be correct. This was the Duke of Wellington. Yet in his old age he is reported to have said to a friend, "In all my life no woman ever loved me—no, not one." The assertion is unfounded, for one woman, Lady Catherine Pakenham (daughter of the second Baron Longford) loved him so much that when she was disfigured by smallpox she offered to release him from his promise to marry her. To his credit the Duke declined the suggestion. It might, however, have made for the happiness of both of them if he had not done so, since his marriage, which took place in 1806, was uncongenial to both of them.

Although his chaplain, the Rev. C. Gleig, declared (and quite correctly) that "the vulgar belief concerning the Duke that he was profligate among women was utterly unfounded," his Grace never disguised his partiality for a pretty face; and if his "friendships" with their possessors were platonic, there were times when the public and the scalmongers called them something else. A memorable instance occurred in 1816, when the proprietor of a vulgar sheet, the *St. James's Chronicle*, was sued by Lady Frances Wedderburn-



LORD CHANCELLOR BROUGHAM

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Webster for unwarrantably besmirching her reputation. The libel of which she complained was a serious one, being nothing less than that she had committed adultery with the Duke of Wellington at Brussels. She claimed fifty thousand pounds damages, and was awarded two thousand.

The last "romance" of the Duke was his distinctly one-sided one with the notorious "Miss J." a young woman of twenty, obviously suffering from a combination of religious mania and ill-suppressed amativeness. This affair, which had its origin when Wellington was sixty-five, and a grandfather, was carried on almost entirely by correspondence. Since, however, "Miss J" (understood to have been a Miss Jenkins) was a troublesome mixture of prudery and piety, and was always putting embarrassing questions to the Duke about his "soul," it came to nothing. Yet it lasted for seventeen years, when Wellington, thinking there had been more than enough of it, brought it to an abrupt stop. With, however, a persistency worthy of a better cause, "Miss J," continued to bombard him with letters, oblivious to the fact that they remained unanswered.

Peers of the realm have from time to time carried off young women. There seems, however, to be only one established instance of the position being reversed. This was that of John Wallop, third Earl of Portsmouth, a youth who was so feeble-minded that it would be an exaggeration to call him half-witted. As a matter of fact he was not more than quarter-witted. The result was, on becoming a widower in 1813, he fell into the clutches of a shady attorney called Hanson; and by means of threats and pressure was compelled by him to marry his daughter Anne. When Lord Portsmouth's relatives heard of the new Countess thus foisted upon them they presented a petition to have the marriage annulled, on the grounds of "undue influence." The petition was granted; and the scheming Miss Hanson deservedly lost her coronet.

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After these examples, selected from among scores that could be given, nobody can say that “romance” has not many facets. What, however, can be said is that some of them are capable of assuming a brighter lustre than others.

SIXTH EARL OF ABERDEEN
The “Sailor Earl”

SIXTH EARL OF ABERDEEN

THE "SAILOR EARL"

I

"ADVENTURES are to the Adventurous." Few, however, could have had more fill of them by flood and field than George Gordon, sixth Earl of Aberdeen, round whose remarkable history revolved much discussion, followed by prolonged wrangles among the lawyers during the years 1866-1872.

Born at Holyrood in December 1841, scion of an illustrious house and heir to a distinguished lineage, George Gordon succeeded to the family earldom when he was twenty-three. Together with his two younger brothers, James and John, he was educated by his father Lord Haddo (afterwards fifth Earl of Aberdeen), a man who combined considerable scholarship with marked religious enthusiasm. The curriculum involved "a love of outdoor exercise, with a hardy, energetic spirit and an absence of any inclination to luxury." It sounds a little Spartan, perhaps. Still, the results were good.

It was not without reason that Lord Haddo's eldest son was afterwards to be known as the "Sailor Earl." From his boyhood he exhibited a roving disposition and a love of adventure. His childish passion was the sea; and, whenever he could manage to elude them, he would slip away from the guardianship of governesses and nurses and accompany the herring-fleet that cruised off the Aberdeenshire coast. No weather was too rough for him; and it is said that he often stopped out all night with his fishermen friends. He learned to pull an oar and set a sail as well as the most experienced of them.

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This skill in seamanship was once put by him to a practical test, when, as a youth, he was spending his holidays at St. Leonards. Procuring an open boat, he crossed to Boulogne, and returned in such a violent storm that the captain of a passenger steamer which was following him declared it impossible he could make the harbour. But he did make it, while the steamer very nearly missed it.

To mark his eldest son's majority, which occurred in 1862, his father (who had become fifth Earl of Aberdeen in 1860) presented every tenant on the estate with a specially bound copy of the *Pilgrim's Progress*. The heir himself did not join in the festivities, as he happened at this time to be in Canada, visiting his uncle, the Hon. Arthur Hamilton Gordon, Lieut.-Governor of New Brunswick. In 1864 his father's death called him home, to assume his position as sixth Earl and third Viscount and to take his seat in the House of Lords. During the next year and a half he remained in Scotland.

“During that period,” says the author of a somewhat fulsome memoir, “his exceeding tenderness toward his widowed mother, his kindness to his brothers and sisters, and his bright and unselfish disposition, made him the centre of happiness in his own home; while the decision, judgment, and self-reliance which he exhibited on assuming the administration of his estates were such as to excite surprise in many who were unacquainted with his real character and capacity.”

It was into a great position that Lord Haddo (as for the two previous years he had been known) then stepped. Yet he held it of small account. To him the coronet and the ermine of a peer of the realm with a place in the senate of his country and an annual rent-roll of forty thousand pounds at his command were as nothing. None the less, he was looked upon as an exemplary landlord and neighbour, with a full sense of his responsibilities. Thus, he built a church, repaired the farm dwellings, and “took a lively interest in the Volunteer movement, becoming a successful and popular officer.

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His free and frank familiarity (a familiarity, however, which never led to any forgetfulness of discipline)," the chronicler is careful to add, "will long be remembered by the corps which he commanded." In fact, as somebody pointed out, he seems to "have done everything required of a Scottish nobleman of the period except contribute an essay to *Good Words*."

In addition to his fondness for the sea, management of his estates and indulgence in amateur soldiering, the young Earl had another hobby. This was for rifle-shooting. As a result of a natural gift, added to constant practice on the moors, he developed into a marksman of more than average skill; and for two consecutive years, 1864 and 1865, he went to Wimbledon as a member of the Scottish Eight. That he distinguished himself there is clear from the account of an impressed reporter:

"The Earl of Aberdeen, who has made admirable shooting, secured the Dudley Cup, limited to prize-winners in other events. The Horatio Ross Prize was also the object of strenuous competition between his lordship and Mr. Peterkin. On a previous occasion Lord Aberdeen, after much effort, surpassed by two points what had hitherto been regarded as the unapproachable score of his agile rival."

There is an odd strain slumbering in all of us. There was certainly a very odd one in the complex of the sixth Earl of Aberdeen. Apparently it overmastered him, for in the spring of 1866, without telling his mother what it really involved, he decided to adopt a course he had long had under consideration. This was to divest himself as far as possible of the family honours he had found so irksome and appear before the world as a commoner. Since it was an integral part of his schemes to begin his fresh life amid fresh surroundings, his first step was to embark at Liverpool for New Brunswick, where he proposed to revisit his uncle.

The start of the expedition was not a good augury, for the captain of the *Pomona*, on which he had booked a passage, went ashore and got so drunk that another

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officer had to be appointed before they left Liverpool. This caused three weeks' delay in the Mersey. The vessel, too, was anything but an ocean greyhound, and the voyage lasted more than six weeks. During its continuance rough weather was encountered, and one of the crew fell from the rigging and fractured his thigh. The *Pomona* did not carry a doctor, and things would have gone badly with the injured man but for the ingenuity of Lord Aberdeen, who happened, among his other accomplishments, to have some surgical knowledge. "I managed to make splints out of a board," he wrote, "and the poor fellow's leg is now set and quite straight."

Still, apart from this little *contretemps*, he seemed to have found nothing amiss; and in a second letter to his mother, posted as soon as he landed in New York, he added some further details.

"We had," he wrote, "several nice men in the ship. On Sundays we used to read the Bible and bits out of a Roman Catholic prayer-book. The captain never held a service. He was a Welshman."

Notwithstanding the bad weather and general discomfort to which he had been subjected, a life on the ocean wave (even when dragged out to the length of this one) exercised such an attraction for Lord Aberdeen, that he resolved to adopt it. He adhered, however, to his original programme so far as to spend a preliminary period with his uncle in New Brunswick. Together with a couple of friends, the Earl of Gosford and Mr. Grant Peterkin (against whom he had shot at Wimbledon), he then left Canada and travelled to Boston. As soon as his companions had gone back to England he took the second step on which he had resolved. This was to sink his identity and assume a fresh one.

From that moment the Right Hon. the Earl of Aberdeen disappeared, his personality being swallowed up in that of "George Osborne," under which name he secured a room in a Boston hotel.

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Wandering along the Boston quays one June morning in 1866, a young Englishman was so struck by the trim appearance of the brig *Wylie*, fitting out for Las Palmas, that he went on board and offered his services. Captain Crosscup, the master, being short-handed, and thinking from his athletic frame and powerful build that he would prove an acquisition, agreed to accept him. The formalities were soon accomplished, and within an hour the volunteer, who said his name was George Osborne, was entered on the ship's books with the rating of able-seaman.

Lord Aberdeen must have been a "good mixer," for he settled down in the foc's'le as if he had never known anything else. He was always popular, too, with the other hands; and, despite his real position, he never gave himself the smallest airs. This is borne out by a letter from one of his shipmates on this first voyage, William Hawkins:

"A person of the name of George Osborne joined us as a seaman. We were in the same watch and became very intimate. I had a good education myself, but I soon discovered he was much my superior. We took to each other from the start. When he joined us Osborne was not dressed as a seaman, and I was surprised he had shipped as one. His hands were tender, and soon got blistered. But he was always active, willing and energetic, and took his fair share of all the work. He made himself most popular with the officers and crew. He told me that Osborne was an assumed name, and that his real name was Gordon; but he said I must not mention it to anybody."

From Las Palmas the *ci-devant* Lord Aberdeen wrote a long letter to his mother, giving her the first intimation that he had left America. He did not, however, mention that with his new career he had adopted a new name:

"I hope you got my letter telling you that I was going on a voyage to try and drive off the nasty and dangerous

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cough, which, when I last wrote, appeared a fixture. If so, you will be glad to hear that there is not now a vestige of it; and by the goodness of God I never enjoyed such perfect health . . . I believe that by spending the winter in a southern climate, and thereby avoiding a cough, my lungs will recover themselves, and I may with safety return in the spring, so much better and, I trust, wiser, as to compensate you for the anxiety you must have felt during this time. . . I saw the most magnificent spectacle in passing far-famed Teneriffe at sunset. It was a grand sight, and one that called up in my mind solemn thoughts and good resolves; and especially vivid and pleasing reminiscences of dear papa."

The theory that Lord Aberdeen had adopted his new career because he found it beneficial to his health (which had given him trouble in Scotland) is supported by a second letter which he wrote to his mother soon after his first voyage was completed:

"Boston, 21st October, 1866.

" You will be glad to hear that I really think that my lungs are permanently cured by the long spell of warm weather and sea air. Yet I think it would be foolish to risk a return to England just at this season. . . . No, much as I should enjoy once more to taste the sweet pleasure of family life, I cannot yet leave this land of freedom and common sense."

"Land of freedom and common sense." This description is indicative of his passion for social equality. Still, had he not assumed an incognito, he might have found less evidence of it. But apparently he could not understand that he was merely exchanging one sort of bondage for another.

He also wrote to his brother James, with whom he had always been on terms of close affection. After giving him his impressions of the New World and the advantages of foreign travel, he added:

"I will say this for England—the more I see of other

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countries, the more convinced do I become that England is the most stupid, pig-headed, stick-in-the-mud of them all."

Clearly, no insular prejudice about this traveller.

Returning to Boston, and still calling himself George Osborne, he next endeavoured to join the *Morning Star*, a missionary ship leaving for Honolulu. But, on the grounds that the insurance company preferred another candidate, Mr. Alpheus Hardy, the Chairman of the American Board of Missions, did not accept him. Although disappointed by this setback, his resolve to adopt the sea as a career was strengthened; and, with a view to becoming better qualified, he entered himself for a course of navigation at the Boston Nautical College in Tremont Street. He must have done well there, since he passed out first among a batch of one hundred and fifty, and was awarded a mate's certificate.

While studying at the Boston College he boarded with a family in the town, from the head of which (the proprietor of a riding-school) he demanded, on leaving, a "testimonial of character," to submit to a prospective employer. This, which was readily given, took the following form:

"Boston. February 4, 1867.

"To all whom it may concern: I certify that Mr. George Osborne has lived in my house during the past four months; and I can most cheerfully recommend him as a young man of good habits and kind disposition.—

Frank Elmore Pearson."

Mrs. Pearson also had a high opinion of her lodger. "He made himself quite at home with us," she said, in discussing him afterwards, "but there was always something of the gentleman about him that I could not properly understand. He often spoke of becoming a captain, and said he hoped to be one some day."

Together with his "kind disposition," Lord Aberdeen exhibited an economical one, inherited, no doubt, from his ancestry. Thus, not only did he endeavour to live

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on his scanty earnings, but also to save a few pounds. Still, for some purpose which he kept to himself, he did once deviate from this rule so far as to cash a cheque. But that he reproached himself bitterly for his "weakness" is clear from a letter on the subject he wrote to his mother:

"I have never had any self-respect since I found means to get that money in New York. I have never had any pleasure in life since. I despise myself for my foolish weakness. I shall never hold up my head again."

In his interesting volume *The Gay Gordons*, Dr. J. M. Bulloch gives some particulars of "George Osborne's" life at this period:

"For a time he earned a livelihood by teaching navigation, for, though as keen as ever on the sea, he could not get a ship at Boston. Then he resolved to try his luck elsewhere, and took a passenger's berth from New York in February 1867 on board the brig *William Mallory* for Galveston, in Texas. He made a great impression on the captain, John P. Wilbur, for during the voyage he talked religion, temperance and astronomy with him, gave an occasional hand in taking in sail, and made a clothes-bag for him."

3

It was only because he had not so far put in sufficient sea service that George Osborne, although otherwise qualified, was unable to secure a master's "ticket." To fill in this necessary period, accordingly, he next signed on for a voyage to Vera Cruz. The trip to that port was an uncomfortable one, for the Mexican war was then at its height, and the town was being bombarded by the insurgents. Added to this, the vessel, owing to eccentric steering, was driven on to a sandbank. "We were glad to get safely off," wrote the wanderer, "for

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the sea was full of sharks. We remained on this howling coast, where sand-flies, horse-flies and mosquitos abound; and where at night can be heard the savage roar of the tigers and wild animals which inhabit the tropical jungle."

The reference to tigers in this part of the world is a picturesque touch. Possibly, however, he meant jaguars.

The work of discharging cargo under a fierce sun was exhausting. Yet Sewell Small, the mate of the *Burton*, declared that, "although he did not appear to be a man who was accustomed to it, Osborne never gave in. . . . It was my duty," he adds, "to select one man to be in my watch, and I selected George for this purpose. I knew I could chat freely with him, though I was an officer, and that he would not take advantage of it."

No unbecoming familiarity between a peer of the realm and the mate of a trading vessel.

If George Osborne was no ordinary seaman, it is obvious, from another of his references to him, that smug Mr. Small was anything but a typical shellback.

"While we were in Boston together," he says, "we went one Sunday to the Sailors' Bethel, where the Rev. Phineas Stowe was the minister. George always went there when in Boston." A second rallying-point of the pair was the local Lodge of Good Templars.

On getting safely back from Vera Cruz the returned mariner took a trip to New York. There he passed another examination and received a certificate as captain. Since, however, no employment as such was procurable for the time being, he resumed his subordinate position on another vessel. At the end of the voyage he wrote, as was his custom, to his mother:

"August 12th, 1867.

"My dearest Mamma,—I hope you are quite well. I am now with a very good man. It is good for me to be here. I hope you will get this letter, and that it will cheer your heart. It tells you of my undiminished love, though I have not heard of or from you for more than a year."

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The "very good man" with whom he was serving at this date was a Captain Wilbur, of the *Mallory*. "As they walked the deck on fine evenings they had," he said, "frequent conversations on the subject of religion, and prayers with the crew."

But the rest of the ship's company would appear to have followed their captain's lead. At any rate, George Osborne could write of them: "We had a truly good crew, and were just like brothers. I never heard an angry word during all the three months that the voyage lasted. They are all scattered on the face of this continent now, but each has little to recollect of the others except what is pleasant and satisfactory. We used to read the Testament every morning after breakfast and before we went to bed, and had another spell after supper."

Evidently the popular impressions of the American mercantile marine, as derived from other critics, were unfounded. At any rate, it would appear that this body was not composed exclusively of the hard-swearers, grog drinking, free-living, wife-in-every-port brand served up in the familiar pages of Dana and Melville.

We are all of us mixed personalities full of odd complexes. But never was anyone more complex than this sixth Earl of Aberdeen. Well-read, cultured above the average, and brought up "in the lap of luxury," he yet preferred rough-living to smooth-living; and to dash and daring and a genuine love of adventure he added a democratic fondness for his social inferiors, a pronounced piety, and a deep regard for his relatives.

His love for his mother was specially sincere. "I know there cannot be her double in this world," he once wrote to his brother James. "I wish to see her again as soon as possible. My best love to dear Mamma. I think of her only. She is always in my thoughts."

Yet, although she was "always in his thoughts," he could bring himself to fill her with anxiety by his continued absence and adoption of a career of which she could not approve.

Still, something must have given him the idea that

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

**THE MAYFAIR CALENDAR
FAMOUS TRIALS RE-TOLD
BLOTTED 'SCUTCHEONS
CRIME ON THE CONTINENT
JUDICIAL DRAMAS
FEMININE FRAILTY**

ETC.



GRENVILLE MURRAY v CARRINGTON

Riot at Marlborough Street Police-Court

his attitude was not entirely immune to criticism, for in a second letter to the countess he declared:

“I have been afflicted with dreadful thoughts lately that something might happen to you. The very thought of such a thing has made me very wretched, and I feel that it might be partly owing to me, and you know that besides you there is nothing in this world that I care for. I almost feel if anything should happen to you it would kill me. I hope you got my last letter from Galveston, Texas. It is very hard writing without hearing from you.”

It does not seem to have struck him that he had only himself to thank for the fact that the correspondence was one-sided. Yet it could not have been anything else, since he never mentioned his address or the ship on which he was serving. Nor did he tell his family that he was passing under another name. As a result, he did not hear of the death of his younger brother James from a shooting accident which occurred in 1868.

4

The Odyssey continued. Impelled, apparently, by some curious nomadic strain in his composition (inherited, perhaps, from some far-off Pict ancestor) for three years he wandered up and down the coast, visiting in turn Mexico, Chile, Florida, Texas, Cuba and the West Indies. If he could not go on a long voyage he went on a short one. He had experience of every type of vessel, from a lake steamer to a schooner or brig. Whether he was berthed forward or aft, with a bunk in the cabin or a hammock slung in the foc'sle, it was all one to him; and when he could not ship as an officer he would ship as a “hand.” He seemed just as contented clambering up the rigging in a gale as setting a course on the bridge.

In his interesting volume of reminiscences, *We Two*, the Marquis of Aberdeen and Temair quotes a letter that was sent to his brother by the owners of a ship he

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commanded at this period. It does not put them in a very attractive light:

“To Captain Osborne. Dear Sir,—You are a good seaman, but too expensive. Get along as equinomical [*sic*] as possible, and lay out nothing beyond what is absolutely necessary. Yours truly,
“T. Southard & Co.”

That George Osborne had his full share of the perils inseparable from a sailor’s life (especially on board a ship where the cost of everything was cut down to the last farthing) is shown by an account he sent his mother of one trip made for this firm:

“Not many weeks ago I thought my last hour had come. I was in a small vessel, deep loaded and very leaky. A furious gale struck her, as morning dawned increasing in violence . . . We were toiling at the pumps and throwing overboard our deckload. But already we had five feet of water in the hold, and nothing could have saved us but a miracle or a change of wind. At ten a.m. God in his mercy sent a sudden change of wind, all in a moment right off the shore, which beat down the sea, and in half an hour the wind moderated. Next day we made the harbour of New York. To-morrow we start for the coast of Florida. Give my love to all my dear ones, and believe in the never-dying love of your affectionate son—George.”

It was no part of his plan to cut himself off permanently from his real position; and more than once he appears to have contemplated returning home. In a letter to Lady Aberdeen, written when he had been a year and a half in America, he alluded to this subject:

“I must come and see you soon, though it is so long since I have heard from you that a vague dread fills my mind; and I would rather go on in doubt than hear what would kill me—that is, if I were to return and

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not find you. How many times has this thought come to me in the dark and cheerless night watches! I have to drive it from me as too dreadful to think of. I wonder where you are just now and what you are doing. I know you are doing something good, and a blessing to all around you."

Later on he again referred to the subject:

"Do not fret for me. Though I should like to see you now, I must defer it a little longer. Yet you may see me before you expect it. At present I am prevented by circumstances from going home or doing just what I should wish."

But Lady Aberdeen was not destined to see her son again. Nobody in Scotland was destined to see him again. Before his letter to her was delivered, he had embarked on his final voyage.

It so happened that during the voyage that was to be his last one, George Osborne served as mate. This was on board the *Hera* schooner, which left Boston for Melbourne and Hong-Kong in January 1870. She was a small vessel, not particularly seaworthy, and, being undermanned and starting in rough weather, everybody experienced an anxious time. Possibly the new officer had some foreboding of what was to occur. "On the day he left," said somebody who saw him off (and who had an odd fashion of speeding the parting), "I told him I was attending the funeral of an intimate friend. He spoke very solemnly of the suddenness with which death comes upon us and of the little we do to prepare for it."

In the light of what was at hand, it would certainly look as if he had been granted a glimpse behind the veil.

Everything happened with dramatic swiftness. Early on the morning of 27th January, 1870, Captain Kent, who commanded the *Hera*, was about to set a fresh watch, when he heard, rising above the wind, the

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dreaded cry, "Man overboard," What followed is best given in his own words:

"I rushed on deck and found that it was Osborne who had gone. Everything that my experience could suggest possible was done to save him, and ropes and planks were thrown to him. The boat was cleared, but it was impossible to launch it in time to do any good. She is a very heavy boat, and I doubt if she could have lived or cleared the vessel . . . I saw Osborne struggling in the water. I am quite sure he must have been drowned. He cannot have been picked up. We wore ship, and laid-to till daylight, but we did not see any more of Osborne. The water was very cold; and even a good swimmer must have perished very soon."

Among the eyewitnesses of the actual tragedy was William Scott, the second mate of the ship.

"Osborne and I," he said in his evidence at the official enquiry that was afterwards held, "were on deck, pulling at the same rope. The ship gave a heavy lurch, and we were caught in the bight of the down-haul. The first shock came on to Osborne, because he was nearest the mainsail. He was dragged into the sea by the rope. There was one cry for help, and then no more. I saw him fall, but could do nothing to prevent it. I threw him a rope as soon as I could. We never saw or heard him again. It was the work of a second."

"It was the work of a second!" One moment, a comrade full of life and vigour, doing his work on the heaving deck; the next, with a despairing cry for help, struggling in the swirling waters of the Atlantic. Encumbered by his heavy boots and seaman's jersey, he must—good swimmer though he was—have sunk within a couple of minutes.

The merchant navy has its traditions. It lived up to them now. Despite the peril that threatened them in that angry sea, volunteers sprang forward to attempt the rescue of their comrade. "An effort," says one of them, "was made to launch a boat. The captain, however, felt that further lives should not be risked."

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The tragic occurrence was duly logged; and on the arrival of the *Hera* at Melbourne a full report was made to the authorities. As, however, his ship had then to clear for Hong-Kong, it was not until the following August that Captain Kent was back in Boston and able to see the owners. He also handed to them the lost sailor's personal effects.

5

In the meantime, Lady Aberdeen, in far away Scotland, was consumed with anxiety about her son, for many months had elapsed since a letter had come from him. Unaware of his address, she had advertised for news of his whereabouts in the Boston journals. As the advertisements brought no response, a Presbyterian clergyman, the Rev. William Alexander, who had been Lord Aberdeen's tutor, and who happened just then to be staying with the countess at Haddo, volunteered to go to America and conduct a search on the spot. The offer was accepted, and Mr. Alexander set off in the autumn of 1869.

The task entrusted him was a difficult one, for the wanderer's letters, although numerous, were scarcely informative. Thus, none of them mentioned the actual name of the ship in which he was serving; and none of them mentioned that he had discarded his title and was passing under a fresh name. Still, with the Rev. Mr. Alexander difficulties existed merely to be overcome, and he landed in America, fully resolved to bring the fugitive back with him. As a starting-point he went to a coast town in Florida from which the last letter had come. But nobody there had ever heard of Lord Aberdeen; and the only fellow-countryman that the British consul remembered as having gone to sea from that port was somebody called George Osborne. Naturally enough, such a name conveyed nothing to Mr. Alexander.

After much travelling and many enquiries in other directions, the clerical investigator lit on a more pro-

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mising clue. Lord Aberdeen, he remembered, had once mentioned sailing on a specific date in the spring of 1867 from New York to Galveston in a vessel commanded by "A good Boston captain, who was also a Baptist and a teetotaller."

The American mercantile marine during the 'sixties (and possibly at a still later period) was made up of all sorts and conditions. Still, captains of tramp steamers who combined devotion to the doctrines of immersion with the principles of teetotalism were comparatively rare. In fact, the shipping-agents as a class were doubtful if such a one existed, except perhaps in Messrs. Barnum and Bailey's circus. But Mr. Alexander, refusing to be discouraged, went through all the sailing-lists he could find for the period in question; and was at last rewarded by learning that the brig *William Mallory* had arrived at Galveston from New York during the period in question. This was something. What, however, was much more was the discovery that her commander, Captain John Wilbur, was renowned for his adherence to the Baptist faith no less than for his sobriety.

Assured that here, indeed, was the one individual who could give him some definite news, Mr. Alexander hurried off to Connecticut to see Captain Wilbur. Nor was he disappointed, for, on being shown a photograph of the missing earl, Captain Wilbur promptly declared: "Of course I know him. That young man is George Osborne. He sailed with me from New York to Galveston on the very date he mentions in the letter to his mother. I remember him because he was handy with his needle, and made me a clothes-bag. We used to have Scripture readings and prayers with the men, in which he joined. He also talked to me very freely on religious subjects and about temperance."

After this the tracing of the other successive steps of the *soi-disant* "George Osborne" until he embarked on the *Hera* at Boston was a comparatively simple matter. Men who had served with him described his personal appearance in a fashion that left no room for doubt;

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his photograph was recognised by them; and shipping-agents and Customs officers produced authentic specimens of his handwriting. Thereupon Mr. Alexander, convinced that there was nothing more to be done in America, returned to Scotland, to tell the countess what he had gathered.

But while he was on the voyage the sad news arrived from Melbourne of the circumstances under which the mate of the *Hera* had perished. The cumulative evidence was too strong to permit of any doubt, as, in addition to the narratives of the eyewitnesses, Captain Kent had brought back the dead sailor's bag, in which were a prayer-book and a bundle of letters which Lady Aberdeen had written to him. Hence, although she had long hoped against hope, she was compelled to accept the fact that the "George Osborne" who figured on the ship's manifest was none other than her son. As a memorial to him she built a chapel near Haddo House with the following inscription from the 93rd Psalm above the porch:

"The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea."

6

Coincident upon the death of his brother George, the next surviving son, John, became heir to the family honours as seventh Earl of Aberdeen in the peerage of Scotland, and fourth Viscount Gordon in the peerage of the United Kingdom. But he could not take his seat at Westminster until he had first set the law in motion by applying for a writ of summons to the Upper House. Before he could receive this two matters had to be definitely established. One was the identity of the seaman George Osborne who had been drowned with the sixth Earl of Aberdeen who was known to have gone to America; and the other was that he had died unmarried.

Proceedings to establish these facts were commenced

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in the Chancery Court at Edinburgh, where application was made to the sheriff for a "Petition of Service." Thereupon an order was issued appointing an advocate, Mr. Henry Smith, to act as commissioner, and, together with an agent of the Aberdeen family, to go to America and collect the fullest possible proof. This was secured by comparing the career of the individual known as George Osborne with the occurrences described in Lord Aberdeen's letters to his mother as having happened to himself. They all fitted in to a nicety. Various shipmates, among them being members of the crew of the *Hera*, also recognised his photograph, as did the manager of the New York bank where he had cashed a cheque. Another link in the chain was the production by a comrade of a rifle, given him by George Osborne, which an Edinburgh gunsmith had made for Lord Aberdeen.

In amassing these particulars the commissioners had no easy task, for they did not always get help where they had expected it. Dr. J. M. Bulloch observes that Mr. Charles Southard, the owner of a vessel which the missing sailor had once commanded, flatly refused to give any evidence unless he were promised a reward; and then, when he did appear under a subpœna, he did not bring the ship's books with him.

Still, others who were examined supplied what was wanted. Among these was a clerk employed by the owners of the *Hera*. He had, he said, seen George Osborne on the day the ship left Boston, and was much struck by some conversation he had with him.

"I noticed," declared this witness, "what he said on this occasion, more particularly because he was a very modest man, and seldom spoke of his own feelings. He never bragged or boasted of anything he had done. In this respect he appeared to me different from many captains and mates; and, in contrast to almost all of them, he never expressed any dislike of the sea."

In summing up the evidence he had collected from various sources in America the commissioner wrote as follows:

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“The more I examine the life and conduct of this young man the more do I admire him. How few of us could stand a microscopic examination of his life from the age of twenty-four to twenty-eight. . . It has been a pleasure of the highest and rarest kind to trace out, step by step, the course of his noble career in America; and, although I knew absolutely nothing of his history and character when I went out, it required but to see a very few of his associates there and to hear them speak of him to make one feel certain that the more closely his life should be scanned the more surely would all the world know what a beautiful life it was.”

Naturally enough, these enquiries and their result attracted a good deal of public attention in America. One of the Boston papers devoted several columns to discussing them.

“The late earl, a genial and accomplished young man, and bearing a high reputation for gentlemanly conduct, was slightly eccentric. Two or three years ago he left home with the avowed determination to travel. . . . In January last he shipped on board the schooner *Hera*, bound for Melbourne and China, where he nominally assumed the duties of mate. On the sixth day out he fell overboard and was drowned. It is to identify the George Osborne who was drowned with the George Osborne who was seen and well known by gentlemen in various parts of this country that a Scotch commissioner and one or two legal gentlemen from Edinburgh are at present on a visit to Boston.”

As was, perhaps, only to be expected (for the Tichborne trial then in progress had set an example) the search for Lord Aberdeen produced a “claimant.” In April 1872 an individual appeared in America and announced that he was the “missing earl.” He seemed, however, so little familiar with the position he assumed

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that he called himself "Lord George Gordon" and also "Lord Gordon." None the less, he managed to impose upon a number of the public unversed in the nomenclature of the British peerage; and among his victims was the financial magnate, Mr. Jay Gould, whom he swindled out of a cool thirty-six thousand dollars, on the strength of a cock-and-bull story to the effect that he was a "Scotch laird of good family and vast wealth."

7

The evidence collected in America was brought back to Edinburgh, where it was examined by Sheriff McLaren, who declared, "I have no moral doubt whatever as to the death of Lord Aberdeen." In doing so, however, he felt constrained to add a long and elaborate "note" to his opinion.

"The antecedent improbability of such a history is certainly very strong; not the less so that in this case there is not the slightest ground for attributing the change of life assumed on the part of the deceased nobleman to any infirmity of mind, or temper, or unfitness for society. . . . The improbability of the history, it is to be observed, arises mainly from the absence of any adequate motive for the conduct of the deceased earl.

"From the evidence of the persons examined it is proved beyond the possibility of doubt that the unfortunate nobleman whose singular history has been traced in the preceding pages and whose versatile talents, courage and industry gave promise of a brilliant career in a sphere more suited to his position, terminated his experience as a sailor by a sailor's death."

In the quaint legal jargon beloved of lawyers all the world over, the actual judgment took the following form:

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“3rd July, 1871: The Sheriff, having heard party’s agents, and considered the proof, productions, and whole process, finds the facts stated in the Petition proved, serves and decerns in terms of the prayer thereof, but always with and under the conditions, provisions, and prohibitory irritant and resolute clauses therein referred to.”

Exactly what this rigmarole meant in plain English was that the dead man’s surviving brother, John Campbell Gordon, could regard himself as the seventh Earl of Aberdeen until somebody else should prove a better claim. But, although it could establish him in the Earldom of Aberdeen and Barony of Haddo, the Scottish Court could not adjudicate upon his second claim to be held Viscount Gordon in the peerage of the United Kingdom.

This was something to be settled by the House of Lords; and it was to that tribunal that, in the spring of 1872, the new Earl of Aberdeen applied for a “writ of summons.” His first step in the process was to present a petition to the Queen, by whom it was referred to the Attorney-General, Sir John Coleridge. On a report being made by him that the evidence offered a *prima facie* case the claim was examined by the Committee for Privileges in the House of Lords, where it was introduced by the Earl of Kimberley.

The Committee was presided over by Lord Redesdale, with the Attorney-General representing the Crown. Sir Roundell Palmer, who appeared for the petitioner, had a glowing testimonial to offer the memory of the deceased earl:

“He was,” he said, a “young man of great virtues, remarkable character, and unusual promise. He was well educated, highly intellectual, and endowed with very many gifts of person as well as of mind; pure and irreproachable in his life and morals; attentive to his religious duties; and a regular and careful reader of the Bible; and altogether exemplary in every respect.”

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After paying this tribute the distinguished lawyer applied himself to the matter more immediately in hand. "The case," he said, in his opening address, "is one attended by only a single difficulty. The sole question for your Lordships is as to the death, without issue, of the late earl. Independent of that single question of fact, the case I have to put is the simplest in the world."

The members of the Committee, however, were not quite so sure; and, jealous of their special functions, were rather disposed to demur at accepting offhand the evidence that had satisfied the Sheriff in Edinburgh. They seemed to think that it should be heard again at Westminster; and a suggestion was accordingly advanced that the witnesses should be called before them and re-examined in London. This suggestion, however, was brushed aside by the petitioner's counsel, for he felt that, if adopted, the proceedings would drag on indefinitely.

"It is," said Sir Roundell, "of course essential for me to prove the death of the late earl. I am, however, not aware that any evidence of this can be given except by the captain and crew of the *Hera*. We have already had their evidence. I would also point out to your Lordships that these persons are engaged in a seafaring life, and, as such, are wandering all over the world. It is a matter of speculation if you could get into touch with them again. And if you did so, what then? You would merely hear the same evidence that has been heard in Scotland. I cannot believe you would get anything fresh."

The persuasive tongue and luminous exposition of the case as presented by Sir Roundell Palmer did their work; and he convinced his hearers that nothing would be secured by scouring America a second time for the witnesses who had already been heard there. They decided, however, to call before them such other witnesses as were still available in England. Among these were the Countess of Aberdeen, the Rev. Mr. Alexander, Sheriff McLaren, Mr. Grant Peterkin, and Mr. Henry Smith. But from none of them was elicited anything

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fresh. As for her son's fondness for the sea, Lady Aberdeen said that when a boy he was anxious to join the navy, but that the Admiralty declared him too old for a midshipman; and she identified the photographs taken of George Osborne in America as being photographs of her son, and also various entries in the log-books of the ships in which he had served as being in his handwriting.

Very few questions were put by the members of the Committee. Lord Chelmsford, however, did once or twice evince a desire for special knowledge.

"Was there anything," he enquired, "in connection with his family which would make it likely that Lord Aberdeen should assume the name of Osborne?"

"Nothing whatever," Sir Roundell had to admit. "On that point no explanation can be offered."

A more difficult problem was put when he read a letter to Lady Aberdeen from her son in which was the statement, "The captain never had a service on board. He was a Welshman."

"Is that a characteristic of Welshmen?" enquired one of the committee.

Profound lawyer as he was, Sir Roundell had no information on this subject. He said so quite frankly.

As the Attorney-General did not contest anything said on behalf of the petitioner, the result of the enquiry was a foregone conclusion. Without a dissentient, the Committee for Privileges declared that John Campbell Gordon, seventh Earl of Aberdeen in the peerage of Scotland, had fully established his claim to the Viscountcy of Gordon, in the peerage of the United Kingdom. As such, he took his seat on 13th June, 1872.

Thus ended the "Aberdeen Romance."

But if the case was ended the mystery was not. This still remained to puzzle the world far beyond Westminster Hall. Various solutions of it were offered. One was that Lord Aberdeen had adopted his action "because he imagined his estates were encumbered."

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Yet, how this would have helped matters was not suggested. The Rev. Mr. Alexander, who perhaps knew him better than anybody else, put forward another theory. "The late earl," he said, "was always deeply impressed with the responsibilities of his rank and position, because of the character of those whom he followed." If this means that he felt he could not live up to the high example set him by his father and grandfather, it is evidence of an ultra-morbid condition of mind. A simpler solution, perhaps, is that he had a quixotic desire to break down "class barriers," and considered that the most effective way of doing so was to abandon his rank and honours and wealth. Such things have happened. Colour, too, is lent to this idea by his old tutor's remark: "He took a very great interest in working-men, and held that unless he knew what it was to be a working-man himself he could not talk to them."

The Committee for Privileges settled the case, but they did not solve the mystery that centred round the astonishing career of George Gordon, sixth Earl of Aberdeen. Questions arose that are still unanswered. Why, to begin with, since he was passionately devoted to her, did he leave his mother at a time when, during her new-made widowhood, his place was more than ever at her side? Why, too, did he voluntarily divest himself of his rank and position, and, under an assumed name, embark upon a life of hard and unremitting toil (with all the perils attaching thereto) as a sailor before the mast? Nobody knows. And nobody ever will know until "the sea gives up its dead."

FIFTH VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE

Peer's "Secret Marriage"

FIFTH VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE

PEER'S "SECRET MARRIAGE"

I

DEATH is apt to result in unexpected disclosures. Yet never was there a more unexpected one than when, on being gathered to his fathers in November 1899, it transpired that the fifth Viscount Bolingbroke had left a widow to mourn him and a son (a small boy of three) to inherit the title and the family estates.

Until then it had always been assumed (and the semi-official entries in *Burke* and *Debrett* and *Lodge* supported the assumption) that the fifth Lord Bolingbroke was unmarried; and the heir to the peerage was held to be his cousin, the Rev. Maurice Ferdinand St. John, Canon of Gloucester Cathedral and Vicar of Kempsford. On his death, too, nearly all the obituary notices announced that this was the case.

It was not until after the funeral at Lydiard Tregoe, in Wiltshire, the family seat of the Bolingbrokes, that Canon St. John and his friends, and the public generally, had any reason to think that the succession was challenged. Then a bombshell was suddenly dropped among them. This took the form of the following intimation, issued by the dead peer's solicitor:

"The late Viscount married late in life, and leaves a widow and a son, the Hon. Vernon Henry St. John, who succeeds to the title as Viscount Bolingbroke. The announcements made in some quarters that Canon St. John is the heir have been made from want of knowledge of the true circumstances."

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“This,” observed a chronicler, with an air of making a discovery hidden from less gifted readers, “upsets all previous authorities who have declared, either that the late Viscount was unmarried, or that his wife died in 1885, whereas she is still living and attended the funeral.”

The remark, “or that his wife died in 1885,” had an odd ring, for it suggested that Lord Bolingbroke had been a widower. A careful examination of the reference books revealed that there was much confusion on the subject. Thus, up to the year 1886 he had always figured in them as a bachelor. Then for the first time the entry concerning him was altered to: “Married Ellen, who died in 1885.” But the lady’s surname was not given, and Canon St. John (grandson of the third Viscount) was still declared to be the heir-presumptive. In 1888, however, the *Debrett* entry read, “Married Ellen (who died 1885), daughter of G. W. Medex, Esq., of Brussels,” and showed two sons living, Henry Mildmay, born 1880, and Charles Reginald, born 1883. This entry stood until 1894, between which date and 1899 the reference to any such marriage and its issue was expunged, and Canon St. John reappeared as heir-presumptive. The hint of mystery about Lord Bolingbroke’s position, from a matrimonial point, thickened when the 1899 edition of *Whitaker’s Titled Persons* added a guarded note:

“It appears to be the settled judgment of the authorities (and we can elicit nothing to the contrary from his Lordship) that this above marriage was void in law, and that, in consequence, his two sons, Henry Mildmay and Charles Reginald, are incapable of succession.”

As however, Lord Bolingbroke himself steadily refused to discuss the matter, the vexed question of whether he was married or single remained unsolved until after his death.

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2

The first of the fifth Viscount Bolingbroke's forebears to cut a path for himself in the world was the statesman, Henry St. John (son of the fourth Baronet), who, in 1712, was created Baron St. John and Viscount Bolingbroke. An odd character, and one with many facets in it. Of him it was said by Swift that "He desired to mix licentious orgies with the highest political responsibilities." In this dual role he was certainly successful. Thus, at one and the same time a libertine and a freethinker, and yet a stalwart champion of the Church; a friend of Marlborough (until he quarrelled with him) and also of Voltaire; avid of power, a diplomat who ran with the Jacobites and hunted with the Hanoverians; and, finally, when dismissed from office for alleged corruption, a man who devoted his leisure to amours and paramours (in which figured *liaisons* with the Duchess of Kendal and Lady Masham), intermingled with excursions into Biblical criticism, pamphleteering and philosophy.

Pope, who often visited him, apostrophised this member of the House of Bolingbroke in his *Essay on Man*.

"Awake, my St. John, leave all meaner things
To low ambition, and the pride of kings,"

and again:

"When statesmen, heroes, kings, in dust repose,
Whose sons shall blush their fathers were thy foes,
Shall then this verse to future age pretend
Thou wert my guide, philosopher and friend?"

In William Carpenter's *Peerage for the People* (a work kept by our grandfathers in locked bookcases) there is a characteristic and rabid allusion to the ancestry of the fifth Viscount:

"This Noble Lord owes his peerage to the celebrated Viscount Bolingbroke, who was disgraced and impeached in the reign of George II; fled to

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France and joined the Pretender (for which he was attainted); was pardoned in 1723, though deprived of his seat in the House of Lords; and devoted the rest of his life to the practice of philosophy and infidelity. Johnson characterised him as 'a scoundrel who loaded a popgun against Christianity, and a coward who gave half a crown to a beggarly Scotsman to let it off.' His total absence of principle in the pursuit of political power, and the whole tenor of his theological writings have deservedly injured his fame in every respect. Still, it is impossible in candour to deny him the possession of exalted power."

This rather suggests that Demagogue Carpenter did not think very much of him.

On the death of his father in 1851 Henry Mildmay, who was born in 1820, became fifth Viscount Bolingbroke, and succeeded to the family honours. There was a long string of them, for, in addition to being Viscount Bolingbroke, he was also Viscount St. John, Baron St. John of Lydiard Tregoze, and Baron St. John of Battersea, as well as a Baronet, with a seat at Lydiard Park, near Swindon, in Wiltshire.

"The boy is father of the man." Certainly the early career of the fifth Viscount Bolingbroke bore out this theory. As a child he was "eccentric"; and as he grew up he developed into a recluse. The family motto, *Nec quaerere, nec spernere honorem*, was implicitly obeyed by him so far as was concerned the "not seeking honours" portion of it, for, beyond accepting a deputy-lieutenancy of Wiltshire, he took no part in public life. Nor, after taking his seat there, did he ever enter the House of Lords. Instead, he spent most of his time at Lydiard, where he exhibited very feudal ideas about his privileges as a landowner. Thus, he strongly objected to the railway being brought anywhere near his property; and, on the ground that the noise might disturb his pheasants, he once protested against a steam whistle being used at Swindon.

FIFTH VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE

Somewhere about the year 1852, just after he had come into his succession, Lord Bolingbroke, paying a rare visit to London, happened to call on a friend at Blackheath. There he met a young girl of seventeen, Ellen Medex, who, with her widowed sister, Madame Bischoff, had just arrived in England from Belgium. She was of mixed nationality, her father being a Greek Jew, who kept a school in Brussels, and her mother being a Scots-woman.

This chance meeting was fraught with strange consequences. Shy as he was, Lord Bolingbroke fell in love with Miss Medex at once, and a few days later begged her to marry him. She was prepared to accept him, when her sister, Madame Bischoff, interfered and peremptorily forbade any such union. As a result there was a bitter quarrel between the two; and in the end Ellen Medex, declaring that she would please herself, left England with Lord Bolingbroke. They went first to Holland and then to Belgium, travelling as a married couple. It is significant, however, that nobody ever saw their marriage certificate. Nor, while they were in Brussels, did they call on Mr. and Mrs. Medex, who were said to be living there.

3

After wandering about the Continent for some years, Lord Bolingbroke returned to England, accompanied by Ellen Medex. Although he represented her to be his wife, he adopted a very curious attitude towards her. Thus, instead of taking her to his family seat at Lydiard and introducing her to his relatives, they lived together in London, in various lodging-houses, as Mr. and Mrs. Morgan, and also in hotels as Mr. and Mrs. St. John. In 1863 a daughter was born to them, whom they called Ellen Rose; and later on there was a boy, who died at birth.

Although during her lifetime Lord Bolingbroke had always preserved such a singular reticence about the

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lady who had originally come to England as Miss Medex and had returned from Belgium with him as Mrs. Morgan, he adopted a different attitude when she died in 1885. She was buried at Highgate Cemetery, and on her coffin-plate was the inscription, "Ellen, Viscountess Bolingbroke," and this was repeated in the register of deaths. Also Lord Bolingbroke then for the first time declared himself in the *Peerages* for the following year as a widower, and the father of two sons, Henry Mildmay and Charles Reginald, born respectively in 1880 and 1883.

Until then, as has been remarked, the editors of these publications had always put him down as a bachelor, and had given his kinsman, Canon St. John, as the next heir. They were accordingly somewhat surprised when they received from him a written request to insert a new entry, reading: "Married Ellen, daughter of G. W. Medex, Esq., of Brussels. She died 1885. Sons, Henry Mildmay, born 1880; Charles, born 1883."

Although in such a whispering-gallery as London there had long been vague whispers of a "secret marriage," the mention of the existence of these two sons was something new. Still, as the intimation about them was signed by Lord Bolingbroke himself, the editors accepted it as beyond question or criticism, and forwarded a proof embodying the amended change. When it was returned, marked "correct," they felt that they had done all that could be reasonably required of them.

Lord Bolingbroke had always had a reputation for "eccentricity." Still, it was held that suddenly to declare himself a widower and the father of two sons amounted to something more than "eccentricity." It gave rise, indeed, to so much talk in interested circles that the publishers of *Debrett* and *Lodge* began to experience uneasy qualms lest an error should have crept into their pages. In his issue for 1887, accordingly, the editor of *Lodge's Peerage* took upon himself to alter the form somewhat. No sooner, however, had he done so than he received a vigorous protest from Lord Bolingbroke:

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“I regret to see in this year’s Spring Edition that my late wife’s surname has been omitted, and that she is described as ‘the daughter of Mr.—’ a wrong and harmful description. I also find there is no mention made of my children. I am quite sure you would not wish these omissions to appear again.”

Lord Bolingbroke’s next step was to call on Mr. Walford, the editor. This gentleman, however, being away from his office, wrote to him on the subject:

“I am very sorry that I did not see you when you were in town last month, as I wished to explain to you that last year I was obliged to let the sheet of *Lodge’s Peerage* containing your name go to the printers’ without inserting the name of Lady Bolingbroke’s father. You told me last autumn, when you left London, that you would send a written memorandum of it to me as soon as you returned to Lydiard, and it never reached me till the page had been printed off. It was, however, printed at full length in the corrigenda, and I told your Lordship that it would be set right in all future editions.

“As, however, your cousin’s name has stood for so many years in *Lodge* as heir-presumptive to the title, there is only one way in which your son’s name can be inserted; and that is if you will kindly desire your solicitor to send me a copy of the certificate of your Lordship’s marriage and of your son’s birth, or at all events of the latter. The proprietors of this work are very anxious not to be mixed up with any questions of disputed succession.”

This very reasonable request being unanswered, Mr. Walford, after an interval, wrote again. “I hope,” he said, “you have not forgotten your promise to send me documents in proof of your son’s claim to be heir to your title. . . I must justify whatever I insert to the satisfaction of the proprietors of *Lodge*.”

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In the meantime somebody else was also busying himself in the matter. This was Mr. Hesilrige, the editor of *Debrett's Peerage*, who, thinking that the mystery ought to be cleared up one way or the other, returned the proof that Lord Bolingbroke had sent him, accompanied by a definite request:

“Will you kindly inform me whether it is correct, as stated on enclosed proof, that the Rev. Maurice St. John is heir to Viscountcy.”

This did extract an answer, if not quite the one which Mr. Hesilrige had anticipated:

“Lydiard Park, Swindon.

“October 31, 1887.

“Dear Sir, I return you the proof sheet enclosed in your letter of the 28th inst. I did not see it was required for me to alter the proof in regard to a collateral branch of my family, as no heir-presumptive is expressly mentioned, and it must be evident to you and others that my son is heir to the title, and you will of course deal with the collateral description according to your usual mode. Yours truly, Bolingbroke.”

Lord Bolingbroke seems to have had odd views as to the manner in which responsible publications were conducted. Since, however, he had marked as “correct” the entry declaring him to have married Ellen Medex, and to be the father of two sons by this marriage, the editor of *Debrett* felt bound to accept his word; and as a result this entry figured for several years in a number of subsequent volumes.

With the passage of time, however, disturbing questions began to be asked by genealogists, and others interested in pedigree research, about this reference to Lord Bolingbroke’s wife and family; and, since nobody had ever seen Lady Bolingbroke or the children, there were whispers that it was not—to put it mildly—in strict accordance with the facts. In the year 1893 some of these whispers reached the editor of *Debrett*. Having

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investigated them and made certain discoveries, he adopted measures which led to a protest being received by him from Lord Bolingbroke:

“Sir,—I return your last proof for correction, in which you have omitted to insert my marriage, the death of my wife, and the birth of my sons. I also enclose a previous proof, which is a correct one, and which also appears in your book of 1888 in my possession. Yours faithfully, Bolingbroke.”

This was answered in the following fashion:

“The Editor of *Debrett* presents his compliments, and will be glad to be favoured with the necessary certificates proving the marriage of Viscount Bolingbroke and the birth of his sons, to enable the particulars to be inserted in *Debrett*.”

On receipt of this, in all the circumstances, very natural communication, Lord Bolingbroke adopted a lofty tone:

“Lydiard Park,
“Swindon, Wilts.
“October 17, 1893.

“Sir, On my return home, I find your letter of the 3rd inst., in which you request me to send you the certificates of my marriage and of the birth of my sons. Your demand appears to be quite an unaccountable step, they having been properly represented in your edition of 1888, which I have here. I have yet to learn from you why they have been eliminated from your recent proof sheet sent to me. Yours faithfully,—Bolingbroke.”

The editor's next effort to extract from his correspondent what was required by him met with no better result. “My certificates,” wrote Lord Bolingbroke, “remain in my possession. I am surprised you should not have chosen to accept my information.”

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The editor of *Debrett*, however, did not abandon his point; and the 1894 issue mentioned no marriage as having been solemnised and no sons as having been born. From that date onwards, too, the name of Canon St. John reappeared as heir-presumptive.

4

When Lord Bolingbroke condescended, as he did at times, to give "explanations," they never explained anything. All they did was merely to increase the fog in which his domestic affairs were engulfed. He had informed the editors of the different *Peerages* that he had two sons (which really was the case), but he had always refused to let anybody see their birth certificates. He had, however, a very good reason for adopting such a course. This was, that Ellen Medex (whom, it is significant, he had never called Lady Bolingbroke during her life) was not their mother.

To show who really was the mother of these two boys it is necessary to turn back to an earlier and long-hidden chapter in Lord Bolingbroke's domestic history. This begins in the year 1881, when, leaving Ellen Medex in London, as "Mrs. Morgan," he, temporarily resuming his name and rank, went off to live by himself at Lydiard. There one afternoon, according to the commonly-accepted version of the story, he was out riding in a country lane when his horse cast a shoe. While it was being adjusted for him by Robert Howard, the village blacksmith, a girl happened to come from the adjoining cottage. This was Mary Howard, the smith's daughter, a beautiful and well-mannered young woman of twenty.

Lord Bolingbroke had some conversation with her, and was struck by her intelligence and charm. During the weeks that followed he paid several other visits to the smithy, and also to Robert Howard's cottage. On each occasion he saw more of Mary Howard; and at each visit he felt more impressed by her. She was demure, but

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unaffected, and, what appealed to him most, she contrived to make him forget that he was a lonely and disappointed man. Her picture pursued him when he was back in the solitary splendours of Lydiard Park, and he found himself wishing that she was always there to brighten them. Suddenly an idea struck him; and, discovering that she wanted employment, he suggested that she should come to him as housekeeper.

For a village girl, such as Mary Howard, the position thus offered was a dazzling one, and it is not astonishing that she accepted it. As soon as arrangements could be made she went from her father's humble cottage to Lydiard Park, and undertook the duties required of her there. While thus employed it was not long before she became something a good deal more than a "housekeeper." But this, perhaps, was inevitable, for Lord Bolingbroke did not attempt to disguise the satisfaction he felt in having this beautiful and accomplished girl to minister to his comfort. The "consequences" that followed were entirely their own affair. Still, Lord Bolingbroke did not shirk his responsibility; and when Mary Howard found it necessary to go away for a period he took her to Bath, where they lived together in lodgings as Mr. and Mrs. Wilson. There, in December 1882, Mary Howard gave birth to a boy, whom they called Henry.

This was the son who, Lord Bolingbroke had declared, was born to himself and Ellen Medex in 1880, and who at one time had figured in the *Peerages* as his heir.

A "double life" being apparently not enough for him, Lord Bolingbroke indulged in a treble one. He maintained three separate establishments, and he maintained them simultaneously. Thus, while he lived at Lydiard under his proper name, he lived at Bath with Mary Howard as Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, and in London with Ellen Medex as Mr. and Mrs. Morgan. It was not until she died that he referred to Ellen Medex as Lady Bolingbroke. When this happened he also told his

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daughter Ellen that "she was not Miss Morgan, but was really the Hon. Ellen St. John"; and when she left his house he addressed letters to her in this fashion. As the boy Henry had to be accounted for, he then asked her to tell people that this was her brother. Since she knew that this was not the case, she refused to say anything of the sort. The result was a rupture between herself and her father.

On the death of Ellen Medex, in May 1885, Lord Bolingbroke, as the *soi-disant* "Mr. Wilson", returned to Mary Howard at Bath. He then told her that, in order to make him his heir, he was representing their son Henry to be the son of the woman who had died. In November of that year a second son, Charles, was born to them. Thereupon Lord Bolingbroke, thinking it would be as well to account for these two boys, suddenly remembered that he still figured in the reference books as a bachelor. To save the situation, accordingly, he informed the editors that he had married Ellen Medex in 1869, and that she was the mother of his sons. As, however, the younger of them had been born several months after her death, he antedated their births by a couple of years.

It was then that he embarked upon the correspondence with *Debrett* and *Lodge* that led to so much discussion from 1887 onwards.

5

Lord Bolingbroke, snapping his fingers at mere editors, and refusing to answer embarrassing questions, continued to live at Bath with Mary Howard. He was then getting on in years, and his health, never very robust, was failing. The care and devotion with which Mary Howard, as "Mrs. Wilson," nursed him during a long and tedious illness awakened in him a sense of gratitude. She had given him her youth; and he resolved, as soon as he should be recovered, to make such return as was possible. In 1893, accordingly, he married her by special licence at a register-office in Bath. He signed the

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certificate in his correct name as Viscount Bolingbroke, but, remembering the telltale inscription on the tomb-stone of Ellen Medex, added, "condition, widower." In his curious passion for secrecy he pledged the superintendent-registrar and the witnesses not to mention the ceremony, giving as a reason "that it would be a bother if it came out, since he had no heir at the time. On receiving their promise to this effect, he made each of them a handsome gift." The promise was kept loyally; "not a dozen individuals," said a Bath journalist, writing after the event, "had any knowledge of this marriage, which was most romantic in all its particulars. Nothing definite concerning Miss Howard's position prior to the ceremony is obtainable, but it is understood that her social status did not equal that of her illustrious husband."

Yet while he gave his wife his name, Lord Bolingbroke would not permit her to use it, and insisted that they should continue to live in Bath (but at a fresh address) as Mr. and Mrs. Wilson. There in 1896 another son, Vernon Henry, was born to them. The doctor who attended the mother knew very well that she was really Lady Bolingbroke, for he had long been familiar with her husband, and the child's parentage was properly given in the birth certificate. This doctor also, at Lord Bolingbroke's request, became his godfather when the boy was christened.

Immediately after the birth of his son, Lord Bolingbroke realised that he would eventually succeed to the peerage, instead of Canon St. John, the heir-presumptive. To safeguard the boy's interests, accordingly, he handed the marriage and birth certificates to his wife, but when doing so (his passion for secrecy still strong upon him), giving her strict instructions not to disclose her identity until he should be dead. Lady Bolingbroke, having no ambition to live as a peeress, accepted the trust. It would not, however, have been of the smallest use if she had done anything else, for, as she said, when afterwards questioned on the subject, "Lord Bolingbroke had a very strong character. He was very self-willed." Hence,

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when she accompanied him on his occasional visits to Lydiard it was always as Miss Howard, and the child was left in the care of a nurse at Bath.

This "May and December" marriage proved, despite Lord Bolingbroke's peculiarities, a happy one. As such it continued for several years. In the autumn of 1899, however, Lord Bolingbroke, an old man of seventy-nine and in failing health, returned to his ancestral seat at Lydiard Park. There he fell ill, and on November 7th of that year he died. The day before his death he summoned his solicitor and made a will. It was a brief document; and in it he left everything he possessed to "My wife, Mary Emily Elizabeth St. John, Viscountess Bolingbroke, absolutely, and I appoint her sole executrix. I impose no trust or condition upon her. She knows my wishes; and I have full confidence that she will do what is just and right with regard to each one of my children." This confidence was not misplaced.

The news of his death was sent to his relatives; and two days later, on an afternoon of wind and rain, Lord Bolingbroke was buried in the family vault at Lydiard Church. A picturesque, if somewhat florid, account of the funeral service ran as follows:

"It was a quiet, simple, unpretentious funeral; nothing in it elaborate—excepting, perhaps, the coffin itself—to mark that a great lord had died, and was now being laid to rest among the ashes of his ancestors. . . Gathered here and there in the church-yard were little groups of solemn-faced villagers. Bareheaded and silent they were; no pushing forward to gaze at the bier; but when the opportunity offered they joined respectfully in the sad *cortege* and followed its members into the sacred edifice.

"An old-fashioned church, this one of Lydiard. Limited in holding-capacity, yet full of interest. The splendid monuments of the St. John family, the numerous tablets on the walls, and the artistic decoration of the portion of the building specially reserved

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for them have often attracted visitors from all parts of the kingdom. On this occasion the pews at the back were occupied by the villagers, some of them long beyond the allotted span, who hobbled up the aisle, grasping in one hand an ashen staff and in the other a crape-bound hat. Young men were there, too; young men who had followed in their fathers' steps and helped to till the broad acres of the Bolingbroke whose body was now before them, and to which they were assembled to offer a last tribute of respect. Above the tops of the seats children were raising their little heads, eager to catch a glimpse of what was happening; wondering, perhaps, at the absence of that pomp and ceremony which they had considered should mark the burial of a Lord.

“A deep hushed silence settled over the congregation when the aged vicar mounted the pulpit and read the service. Often his voice was inaudible, as the pelting rain beat upon the windows with the fury of the storm and the wind went shrieking through the trees that surround the church.”

In ignorance of his late cousin's “double life,” Canon St. John, on hearing of Lord Bolingbroke's death, naturally regarded himself as the heir, and made arrangements to assume the position. When, however, his solicitors had investigated the story revealed to them by the widow and found no flaw in it he withdrew his claim to the peerage. “The reverend gentleman,” said a local journalist, referring to the steps adopted by him, “has, together with his legal advisers, paid a visit to Bath. We understand, however, that it is now fully acknowledged that there is no possibility of contesting the conclusive and abundant evidence that, as a result of this visit, has come to light that his late lordship was married and left a son. . . Since his birth the little Lord (who is chubby-faced and aristocratic-looking) has been cared for at 10 Russell Street, Bath, where he has always had the most devoted attention from his parents. It is a mere

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measure of justice to point out that, while he kept his marriage secret for reasons not difficult to guess, Lord Bolingbroke made the most complete and conscientious preparations possible for establishing his son's succession to the title and estates."

While the Bath journal described the "Little Lord" as "chubby-faced and aristocratic-looking," a London paragraphist was responsible for a somewhat different description. "The new Viscount," this authority informed his readers, "is tall and spare, with an intellectual face. To marked delicacy of feature he adds refinement, amiability of temperament and charm of manner, and that invariable courtliness which is characteristic of true breeding."

Since the new Lord Bolingbroke was a small boy of only three, the accuracy of this description was questioned. It then, of course, transpired that the writer had fallen into the error of confusing him with Canon St. John.

6

Although he duly figured in all the reference books from 1900 onwards as having succeeded as sixth Viscount Bolingbroke on the death of his father in 1899, the position of Vernon Henry St. John was felt by some people to be still a little equivocal. Accordingly, when he came of age he presented a petition, claiming a writ of summons to Parliament in the Peerage of Great Britain. This claim was referred to the Attorney-General, who reported that nothing was wanting in it beyond proof that the petitioner was the eldest legitimate son of the last Viscount. The necessary certificates bearing on this matter having been handed in, the claim was examined by the Committee for Privileges of the House of Lords. In the course of the enquiry that then took place some very remarkable facts concerning the domestic arrangements of the late Viscount Bolingbroke were revealed.

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As a preliminary, Counsel for the Petitioner was asked by the Chairman (the Earl of Donoughmore) if he had any evidence to offer that the late Lord Bolingbroke was "business-like in ethical matters"?

"My evidence," was the answer, "is that he was not quite business-like. He took rather a circuitous route about doing anything."

This, in view of his correspondence with the editor of *Debrett*, and his habit of living under different names, seemed a mild way of putting it.

In the course of his arguments counsel for the petitioner pointed out that it was no part of his case to prove that Lord Bolingbroke had not married Ellen Medex, and it was not desired to cast the smallest aspersion on the birth of that lady's daughter, Miss Ellen St. John. His case was that, whether any such marriage took place or not, there were no surviving sons. Lord Bolingbroke, he said, had, after the death of Ellen Medex in 1885, undoubtedly married Mary Howard in 1893; and the petitioner, Vernon Henry St. John, born in 1896, the son of this marriage, was, he contended, the lawful heir. "I will ask your Lordships to say," he concluded, "that there is no male issue living of Miss Medex, and that the petitioner here is justified in his petition, and is thus entitled to the writ of summons for which he asks."

The witnesses called in support of the claim included Viscountess Bolingbroke, the doctor who had attended her during her confinement, Miss Ellen St. John, the family solicitor, an official from the Heralds' College, Clarenceux King of Arms, and the editor of *Debrett*. The first of these to be examined was Dr. Carter, in practice at Bath. He said that he had known Lady Bolingbroke before her marriage, when she was Miss Howard, as well as after it, when she was called Mrs. Wilson. He was the medical man who had been present at the birth of her son Vernon Henry. Lord Bolingbroke, who was in the house at the time, then called himself Mr. Wilson; and had remarked to him that this boy would "incon-

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venience" his cousin, Canon St. John, the heir-presumptive to the title.

Lady Bolingbroke gave her evidence with complete and disarming candour. She kept back nothing. Lord Bolingbroke, she said, had told her about Ellen Medex, and he had suggested to her that their son Henry, born in 1882, prior to their marriage, should be brought up as the son of Miss Medex, in order to inherit the title. She had refused, but her opposition was not effective. Their second son Charles was born in 1885, and not in 1883 as the original entry in *Debrett* declared. While at Lydiard she had always been known as Miss Howard; and while in Bath she was called Mrs. Wilson, and Lord Bolingbroke passed there as Mr. Wilson. It was, however, under his correct name that he had married her there at the register-office in 1893; and their son, Vernon Henry, the only surviving issue of this marriage, was born in 1896. On the death of her husband the estate was found to be heavily mortgaged. She had maintained a home for all her three sons at Lydiard, and she had also continued the allowance that Lord Bolingbroke had made his daughter, Miss Ellen St. John.

"Did you," Lady Bolingbroke was asked, "know that your two elder sons, Henry and Charles, were entered in various *Peerage* publications as the issue of your husband and Miss Medex, the lady then understood to be his wife?"

"Yes, he told me so. He wanted to make Henry his heir. He said he thought it would be a good plan to bring him up as the son of the person who died, in the hope that he might be able to claim the title."

"What was your view about that?"

"I demurred."

"Did it have any effect?"

"None."

Lord Bolingbroke's daughter, Miss Ellen St. John, had something to say about her father's early life in London. He was then living, she said, in Gloucester Place, with her mother, Ellen Medex, as Mr. and Mrs.

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Morgan, and afterwards they moved to Oxford Terrace. She had never discovered the exact date of her birth, but she was about twenty when her mother died. She attended the funeral, and saw that the coffin-plate bore the inscription, Ellen, Viscountess Bolingbroke. It was after this that her father told her that her real name was not Morgan, but St. John. He had then asked her to tell a friend of his, Captain Wickham Martin, that she had a brother living; but she had refused to do so, as she was quite positive that she had never had a brother.

The family solicitor's contribution to the enquiry was that careful search at Somerset House had not revealed any marriage of Lord Bolingbroke and Ellen Medex. Nor had the birth certificates of the two sons, Henry and Charles (about which the editor of *Debrett* had once displayed such an entertaining interest), come to light. What, however, was still more astonishing was that no record of Mr. George Medex, the father of Ellen Medex, had been found among the archives at Brussels; and he was not even entered at any consulate or on the registration-lists of foreigners in Belgium.

When it came to his turn to reply, Counsel for the Crown made no difficulty about accepting what had been advanced by the other side. "I do not think," he said, "I have anything to submit on behalf of the Attorney-General. The view that the Attorney-General took of this case was that the facts were very peculiar; and that, in view of the inconsistent statements made by the late Lord Bolingbroke, it was a matter in which your Lordships should hear the evidence. But I do not think I can properly ask your Lordships to draw any other inference from the facts than the one which has been submitted by my learned friend."

Unlike most peerage claims upon which the Committee for Privileges had to come to a decision, this one was not involved. The facts were not really disputed; and such as offered any element of doubt were cleared up by the production of the necessary certificates of marriage and birth, together with extracts from baptismal and burial

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registers. The result was, on the conclusion of the evidence thus offered them, that the Committee announced "they would report in accordance with the petition presented." When they did so it was to the effect that the claim had been established. This was expressed, not in plain English, but in the odd jargon always adopted at such times, viz., "Read and agreed to; and Received and Adjudged accordingly; and Resolution and Judgment to be laid before his Majesty by the Lords with White Staves."

The last chapter in this fight for a peerage was published in the *London Gazette*. It took the form of an official intimation, declaring that "A Writ, directed to Vernon Henry St. John, summoning him to the Upper House of Parliament, by the name, style and title of Vernon Henry Viscount Bolingbroke and St. John, has been passed under the Great Seal, pursuant to Warrant under his Majesty's Royal Sign Manual."

Thus rang down the curtain on the long-drawn-out drama of the "Bolingbroke Peerage Claim."

THIRD DUCHESS OF BOLTON
“Strawberry Leaves” and the Stage

THIRD DUCHESS OF BOLTON

“STRAWBERRY LEAVES” AND THE STAGE

I

WHATEVER may be the case in other countries, a *liaison* between the stage and the peerage is nothing new in England. One such existed when the theatre was first established. It has also continued; and, according to the reference works, from the sock and buskin (or their modern equivalent) to the “strawberry leaves” has now almost become an accepted transition.

Among the long list of theatrical ladies who have risen from the ranks of the chorus to “that glittering circle where coronets flash their gems,” the best known is, perhaps, Lavinia Fenton. But she was not the first to reach that eminence. The distinction, as such, belongs to Anastasia Robinson, a young woman of modesty and culture and ability, and the daughter of a successful artist.

Born in Italy, and gifted with a beautiful voice, Anastasia was trained to become a professional singer; and as such she began her career on the concert platform. Making good progress, in 1714 she joined the Italian Opera Company at Covent Garden. There she sang her way into the hearts of admirers by the dozen. Prominent among them was a man of sixty, who also happened to be a widower. This was Charles Mordaunt, third Earl of Peterborough. Many-sided, he had won distinction as an admiral, a general, and an ambassador; and was also something of a scholar and a good deal of a courtier.

But if the Earl of Peterborough was a great match, he was also a great lover; and the union of Anastasia Robinson and her elderly admirer, which took place

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in 1722, was a very happy one for both of them. Yet it began in circumstances that might well have led to a contrary result, since the bridegroom insisted on keeping it a secret for thirteen years, though it was not a very close secret. All the same, the position of the countess was invidious, and malicious tongues often wagged. Lord Peterborough, to do him justice, took effective measure to stop them when he heard them. Thus, he compelled an operatic tenor "to confess upon his knees that the fair Anastasia was a nonpareil of virtue and beauty"; and he also sent his seconds to challenge Lord Stanhope, "who had been rather free in his remarks about the lady." Yet it was not until 1731 that he would permit his wife to wear a wedding-ring and live in the same house as himself; and he did not publicly acknowledge his marriage until 1735. He then put an end to all gossip and scandal by going through another ceremony with her at Bristol, in the presence of a number of his relatives. The result was to shatter the long-standing tradition that, while he could go there for a mistress, a nobleman could not possibly go to the stage for a wife.

The tradition thus upset was not repaired. It was not considered necessary to repair it, for none of the dire consequences that had been predicted had ensued. The result was, in the years that followed coronets of various patterns—differing as to whether the husband happened to be a duke, marquis, earl, viscount or mere baron—fell thick and fast on the lily-white brows of other actresses.

2

If the Right Hon. the Earl of Peterborough set the example, it was followed by somebody a cut above him, for the next peer to select a bride from the footlights was his Grace the Duke of Bolton.

The future Duchess of Bolton was Lavinia Fenton. Her start towards that position was distinctly humble. She began with the drawback of a father who had not



WILLIAM HENRY COOKE, LONDON, ENGLAND

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considered matrimony an essential preliminary to paternity. This was one Lieutenant Beswick, R.N. Instead of making Lavinia's mother an "honest woman," he loved and sailed away. But before joining his ship he sent her a letter full of smug advice as to her conduct:

"I know, Madam, that not a few will expect to make an advantage of my absence; and as you have beauty to attract the noble, I dread lest your weakness should be overcome by gay appearances, gold and importunities. There are as many hazards at land as at sea, and a neat vessel (such as you are) may be stranded, run down, or split in the twinkling of the moon if you have not a hand at the stern and your eye to the compass. Therefore, my Dear, be careful."

Obviously, what he really meant was, "be good, if you can."

To this injunction he added a wish (quite unaccompanied by any suggestion of contributing financial support) that "the living monument of our loves" should, if a girl, be called Lavinia.

Although the lieutenant protested "My passion is permanent, and not the flight of an amorous minute," no more was seen or heard of him. Possibly, and in approved nautical fashion, he had another wife in another port; or perhaps his vessel went to Davy Jones's locker.

As luck would have it, "the lady who had thrown in her lot with the gallant and amorous tar" was in due time "brought to bed of a girl, with very little noise or ceremony"; and in obedience to the paternal wish the child was christened Lavinia. Feeling that there was small prospect of the infant's father returning to put a ring on her finger, the mother wisely decided to make the best of a bad job. Accordingly, when the chance offered itself, she married a Mr. Fenton, "who," says Sir Bernard Burke, "from motives of delicacy that would have done credit to one in a much higher station, gave his adopted daughter his own name."

Beyond this no other advantage was secured, since

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Mr. Fenton merely earned a precarious livelihood by keeping a coffee-house in an Old Bailey slum. As he drank most of the profits, and ate the rest of them, things would have gone hardly with him, saddled as he now was with fresh responsibilities, had not Mrs. Fenton proved herself of a good managing disposition. She set the coffee-house business on its legs and transferred it to the more fashionable neighbourhood of Charing Cross, where she attracted a *clientèle* from the “bucks, and beaux and fops,” and the red-heeled, embroidered-waistcoated gallants of the district. As it was necessary to keep down expenses as much as possible, little Lavinia, so tradition has it, was employed there in the capacity of waitress. She must have been a remarkably young one. Still, she was a precocious child, for, at the tender age of sixteen, she is said to have had a *liaison* with a nobleman of foreign extraction, a Portuguese count, to wit.

In thus treading the broad path Lavinia was only following the maternal example, for it is recorded of her mother that “about this time she had an intrigue upon her hands which began in the playhouse and ended in the bed-chamber.” Of this appetite-whetting disclosure no further details are given.

The Portuguese romance was short-lived. What ended it was that Lothario, having spent all his ready money, found himself in a debtors’ prison. Thereupon, Lavinia, who had a warm heart, procured his liberty and enabled him to return to his native land by selling the fal-lals and gewgaws he had given her in happier times. She did not lose by thus following her generous instincts, as Don Juan, his financial affairs adjusted, paid back every halfpenny.

In addition to that of the Portuguese nobleman, Lavinia turned the heads of a draper’s assistant and a dashing young ensign. She appears to have twisted the pair completely round her finger, for they both complained that they were unable to attend to their proper duties. The knight of the yardstick even found himself offering his customers the wrong goods, and annoying

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them (and his employet, whose profits were imperilled) by declaring that green silk was the same as India damask.

The military victim, however, was in much worse plight, as is clear from an impassioned letter he wrote her on the subject:

“My dear, dear Guardian Angel,

“Could you conceive the anxiety I suffer on your account, you would surely pity me; for there’s never an officer of our Regiment but takes notice of my being changed (since I saw you upon the stage) from the most lively, brisk, fashionable, mannerly, genteel Beau in the whole Army to the most dull, insipid, slovenly, out-o’-the-way-tempered dunce in Christendom. Damme, Madam, if I am not so overcharged with love that my heart, which is the bullet in the barrel of my body, will certainly burst and blow me into atoms if I have not your help to discharge the burden. And then, Blood ! Madam ! I am guilty of so many blunders and mistakes in the execution of my office that I am become quite a laughing-stock to the whole Army.”

As a typical slip, the love-sick warrior says that he attended a parade, wearing his sword on the wrong side (a reflection, this, on the efficiency of his batman); and that, “instead of addressing the colonel in the usual terms of ‘Most Noble Sir,’ he unwittingly called him ‘Madam.’ ”

3

That Lavinia Fenton should adopt the stage as a career was only natural. She had every qualification for it, being richly endowed with a pretty face, a good singing voice, a real gift of mimicry, and an abundance of charm. No stage door that was ever built could keep out such a girl, at any rate not for long. The one she slipped through first was (with the help of a comedian, Mr. Huddy) that of the “new theatre” in the Haymarket, where, in March 1726, she had a small part and a big

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success in Thomas Otway's *The Orphan, or the Unhappy Marriage*. Her next appearance was at the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre, where Manager Rich was so pleased with her that, fearing she would be tempted from him by jealous rivals, promised her a contract and fifteen shillings a week. Lavinia jumped at it.

Salaries in those days, even for accepted stars, ruled small. This one certainly was a "star," and of considerable magnitude. "She became," says a critic, "the talk of the coffee-houses, the most celebrated toast in town. Her face, her form, her grace, her voice, her kindness, her simplicity, were lauded alike on all hands."

This, of course, was to the good. What, however, was to the bad was that "her reputation attracted many licentious admirers." Details are furnished by a chronicler of the period. According to this authority, "one libertine of high rank would fain have had her give up public fame and private character for the pleasure of leading with him an isolated life in the country, in return for which he pledged himself to resign the dissipations of the capital, in which he had hitherto borne a prominent part. But though this proposal was accompanied by liberal offers of money—by everything, indeed, short of marriage—she, with good sense and the right feeling, repulsed her passionate adorer."

In this rigidly-correct step Lavinia summoned the Muse to her assistance. Mere prose being too poor a medium to put "the libertine" in his proper place, she delivered herself of a "poem," which began:

"Vain Fop, to court me to a rural Life,
Let him reserve that Usage for a Wife."

and ended:

"Curious of Worth, I prize my Freedom more,
Than to withdraw like an abandoned W...!"

Although he did not know it, when he made his new recruit an offer of fifteen shillings a week salary, Manager Rich had a card up his sleeve that was to prove a trump one in any theatrical pack. This was a musical piece

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called *The Beggar's Opera*. The author, John Gay, took his work to Pope and Swift, and invited their candid opinion. It was not embarrassingly cordial. "Neither of us," declared Pope afterwards, "fancied it would succeed. We took it to Congreve, who, having read it over, said 'it would either take greatly, or else be damned confoundedly'."

The piece had also been rejected by the Drury Lane management. None the less, Rich, preferring his own opinion, determined to give it a chance. The production, however, hung fire for want of a suitable actress to play the leading role. Dozens of candidates were rehearsed, but none of them came up to the author's idea of a Polly Peachum. Hence, this "Newgate pastoral," as Swift called it, might have been shelved indefinitely, had it not at last occurred to the management that they already had somebody on the theatre's salary-list, drawing as much as fifteen shillings a week, who had shown promise.

Thus it was that Lavinia Fenton was told to "read" the part. She did better. She acted it. And she acted it, moreover, in such a fashion that the problem was instantly settled. There was only one possible Polly Peachum, and that was Lavinia Fenton. For once, author, manager and producer found themselves in agreement.

Everybody knows how, when put to the test of the box-office, the managerial view was endorsed by the public. Yet stage folk in those far off days were so little avid of notoriety that, unlike the present condition of things, neither the name of the librettist nor that of any member of the cast was given in the preliminary announcements. None the less, the first night of *The Beggar's Opera* on 29th January, 1728, made theatrical history. Never was (and never has been) such an unchallenged success. "No performance for these many years," declared the editor of the *Daily Journal*, "has met with so much applause." Nor is it difficult to understand why this was the case, since, apart from its tuneful airs, the "book" had qualities of wit, satire, and rollicking

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humour that had not previously been offered the public. Every little errand boy whistled the songs; and the daring squibs and political allusions (at the expense of my Lord Townshend and Sir Robert Walpole), and the satires upon the Court, furnished the chocolate-houses (and the pot-houses) with gossip. The result was, the piece (which had been refused by the purblind Cibber and his fellow-patentees as "having nothing in it") shattered all records, and secured the hitherto unprecedented run of sixty-two consecutive performances. No wonder, "Rich was gay," and "Gay was rich." Yet nowadays the latter's royalties, which only amounted to a few hundred pounds, would be regarded by the average dramatist with contempt.

Although "press-agents" had not been invented at that period to worry playgoers with childish stories about actors and actresses, there was plenty of propaganda where this piece was concerned. A hot dispute as to the possible effect of the opera on "public morals" was carefully engineered by Rich and his colleagues. Sides were taken; and the Cloth joined in the discussion. Swift championed Gay's libretto on the grounds that "by depicting vice in the strongest and most odious light it did eminent service to religion and morality." A Court chaplain, however, the Rev. Thomas Herring, would not have this, and denounced it from the pulpit. Thereupon Swift took up the challenge, and declared in the columns of a newspaper that "the piece will probably do more good than a thousand sermons of so stupid, so injudicious a divine." But the Rev. Mr. Herring had his supporters. A conspicuous one among them was Sir John Fielding. "Many robbers," he said, "had confessed to him that they had been seduced by *The Beggar's Opera* to the commission of those crimes that had brought them to the gallows."

The natural result of all this was to stir up public interest and send the mob clamouring for seats. But it was the singing and dancing and acting of Lavinia Fenton that secured the real success of Gay's libretto. Never was such a bewitching Polly, so full of charm and

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spirit and flashing humour. She was irresistible. The Town hung on her every word; her portrait was in every print-shop; she scattered hearts like ninepins; crowds assembled at the stage door to watch her enter and leave the theatre; and songs were composed and pamphlets written in her honour. Seizing his opportunity, an enterprising publisher rushed out a shilling volume, "The Life of Lavinia Beswick, alias Fenton, alias Polly Peachum; interspersed with convincing proofs of her ingenuity, wit and smart repartees." Added to this were "Some remarkable instances of her Humanity to the Distressed, and her Judgment in Poetry and History and Painting, and the Reason why so many Great Men have been her Humble Servants"; and much else besides. Although the promised details were meagre, this was a good deal for a shilling, and a big sale was soon secured.

4

As was, perhaps, inevitable, Lavinia Fenton met with the penalties as well as the rewards of success. Slights and innuendoes assailed her private character; and her name was linked with that of more than one of the modish following that filled the theatre at every performance. Among the crowd of "fashionables" during the sixty-two nights of the original "run" there was no more regular attendant in the boxes at the Lincoln's Inn Fields playhouse than Charles Paulet, third Duke of Bolton, "a man of pleasure"; and, according to Swift, "a great booby, who does not cut any figure at Court, or anywhere else." He also happened to be married; and, despite the fact (or perhaps because of it) that she "was crammed with virtue and good qualities," had been living apart from his wife for fifteen years.

"My poor friend, the Duchess of Bolton," wrote Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, "was educated in solitude, with some choice of books, by a saint-like governess." But it was all as nothing to her lawful spouse. His fancy was elsewhere. Having, in his capacity as a

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“man of pleasure,” the *entrée* to the green-room, he soon made the acquaintance of the new theatrical star; and the acquaintance promptly developed to such a pitch that, one summer morning, the chroniclers of gossip had a titbit to serve up for their readers, viz., “The Duke of Bolton has run off with Polly Peachum.” Gay, who was taking the waters at Bath, sent the news of this happening to Swift, in Dublin. “Polly, who was before unknown,” he said, “is now in so high a vogue that I am in doubt whether her fame does not surpass that of the Opera itself.”

By continuing to live for another twenty-three years the Duchess of Bolton had her revenge for having her patrician nose put out of joint by a young woman of Lavinia’s plebeian extraction. This effectually upset any hopes that the latter might have entertained of being led to the altar. Still, since half a loaf was much better than none, she lived with the Duke throughout this interval in what the moralists called “guilty splendour,” first at Hackwoods and then at Westcombe House, Greenwich. Although not mercenary, the fair Lavinia could, none the less, drive a good bargain. The terms on which she capitulated were liberal, viz., “four hundred a year during pleasure, and upon disagreement two hundred more.” Times change; and, judging from the present tariff, this would now be considered moderate.

While waiting to step into the shoes of the Duchess, Lavinia and the Duke, wearying of their country retreat, also had a preliminary and somewhat prolonged honeymoon on the Continent. During this period his Grace, prepared for all emergencies, was accompanied by his domestic chaplain, the Rev. Dr. Wharton, to tie the knot and give it the sanction of the Church the moment he should be free. The reverend gentleman, however, thinking that his services were not likely to be required, and perhaps having qualms as to what his bishop would say to him for the tolerant attitude he was adopting, threw up the appointment and returned to England after six months. The result was, when the Duchess died, in

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September 1751, he was not on the spot, and the Duke was compelled to have the ceremony performed by the chaplain of the British embassy at Turin. When Lavinia Fenton was thus made an "honest woman" she was forty-three and the Duke was sixty-six.

Lavinia Fenton's dramatic career had been short. Still, she had profited by it, for being "adaptable" she proved herself as conspicuous a success in the salons of Mayfair as she had been on the stage. She could hold her own in any assembly, having, so the Rev. Dr. Wharton always declared, "much wit, good strong sense, and a just taste in polite literature." With his bride thus equipped, the amorous Duke had no cause to regret having done "the right thing" at long last, and put a ring on the finger of his ex-mistress. The decision met with public approval. "Her Grace," says a paragraphist, who specialised in the doings of the nobility, "filled every requirement of her lofty station, as a duchess, a wife and a mother. Admired by all, she enjoyed her envied honours for many years."

As a matter of strict accuracy, however, she did not enjoy the dignity of wifehood very long, for the Duke of Bolton was gathered to his fathers within three years of Lavinia becoming a duchess. In 1760 Lavinia herself, who had presented him with three sons (not born in wedlock), followed her husband to the grave, and was buried at Greenwich "with all appropriate ceremony."

"We are informed," says the *Public Advertiser*, "that her Grace the late Duchess of Bolton has left behind her three sons, but bequeathed the bulk of her fortune to her physician."

With reference to this matter, Horace Walpole has a story that does not redound to the credit of the last days of the erstwhile Lavinia Fenton. A couple of years before her death, he says, she became enamoured of ("picked up with" is his less delicate way of putting it) an Irish doctor, one George Kelley. His influence over his patient was such that, when she was on her death-bed, he got her to appoint him her executor.

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Having done this, “he sent for a lawyer to draw her will; but the man, finding who was to be her heir instead of her children, refused to draw it. The Court of Chancery did furnish another less scrupulous, and her three sons have but a thousand pounds apiece, and the surgeon nine thousand.” Walpole, however, does not add that these sons, although disinherited, were already well provided for under a previous settlement made by their father. Nor was the fact that they were illegitimate held to be a bar to their material prospects, since one of them entered the Army, another the Navy, and another the Church.

But Walpole, with his love of scandal and gossip, soon found another stick with which to assault Lavinia’s memory. She had scarcely been buried when he informed a friend, “The famous Polly, Duchess of Bolton, is dead, having, after a life of merit, relapsed into Pollyhood.” What he could not forgive in her was her early connection with the theatre; and he thought no more of actresses than did Lord Chesterfield, who described players, whether men or women, as “fiddlers and mountebanks.”

When at the height of her histrionic triumphs, Hogarth painted a portrait of Lavinia Fenton, depicting her as “a thoroughly English-looking girl, beautiful quite as much from her healthiness and freshness and natural gifts of colour, as from the regularity of her features or the symmetry of her form.” A hundred and fifty years afterwards, this portrait was purchased by the Directors of the National Gallery for eight hundred guineas. This, it need scarcely be said, was very much more than Hogarth himself received.

5

The Beggar’s Opera did not stop with elevating Lavinia Fenton into a duchess. Two more Polly Peachums were destined to wear coronets, one as a countess, and the other as a baroness. The first to win a peer in the matrimonial market was the “Polly” of the 1813 revival. Her name was Mary Catherine Bolton. That of her husband was Lord Thurlow.

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Mary Bolton was the daughter of a London attorney, and was born in 1790 in a house off Bow Street. From the first the path to the footlights was made smooth for her, since she encountered no parental opposition when she said that she wished to become an actress. On the contrary, she was encouraged in her ambition by being taught singing and music. The verdict of her instructors was so favourable that, "at the age of seventeen, with a diffidence natural to the character, she consented to make the awful attempt of dramatic exhibition." As luck would have it, Harris, the manager of the Covent Garden Theatre, was reviving *The Beggar's Opera*, and wanted a "Polly." Until then Mary Bolton had only seen two plays in her life, and this was not one of them. Yet she was selected for the part among a number of other applicants. Beginner's luck: but the choice was justified, for, if not another Lavinia Fenton, the newcomer had youth and personality and ability, and scored a very fair success. Indeed, one critic, finding mere prose an inadequate medium in which to express his opinion of her talents, had recourse to verse:

"Lo, Bolton comes, with simple grace array'd,
She laughs at paltry arts, and scorns parade;
Nature through her is by reflection shown,
Whilst Gay again knows Polly for his own."

Not quite the high-water mark of poetry, perhaps. Still, a well-intentioned effort.

Since, however, she had no previous experience, the part was a little beyond the newcomer's capacity. The result was, at the end of the run her engagement was not renewed. Being a sensible young woman, Mary Bolton took this setback in philosophical fashion and continued her studies. A provincial tour followed; and in this she recovered so much lost ground that she was invited to return to Covent Garden, where she played Ophelia to Kemble's Hamlet. But it was as Ariel that she won her greatest triumph. "She sported about," declares an enraptured critic, "in all the brightness of a sylph,

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and realised to the eye the poetry of the character in a manner which could only be believed by those who witnessed it."

Many wooers sought the hand and heart of the new Polly Peachum. It is said that among them was a royal duke. But Mary Bolton, well aware that difficulties are apt to be put in the way of marriages between members of the blood royal and mere commoners, declined to accept an equivocal position, and sent his Grace about his business. She lost nothing by the decision, as she eventually secured a coronet (albeit one of less-pronounced lustre), since, in 1813, "while still in her virginal prime," she married Edward, second Baron Thurlow. The engagement was referred to in a theatrical organ of the period as that of "a female who is about to receive the just reward of captivating talent joined to exquisite beauty and exemplary virtue. . . Miss Bolton, we can assure our readers, enters the illustrious Thurlow family with the full approbation of every member of it."

Apart from marrying her, the most sensible thing Mary Bolton's husband ever did was to be born the son of a Bishop of Durham and nephew and heir of a distinguished Lord Chancellor. The result was, at the tender age of three he was jobbed into a snug billet as registrar of the diocese of Lincoln, and at seven he was advanced to be "clerk in charge of the estates of idiots and lunatics." As was the custom in that era of unchecked nepotism and plurality, these offices were kept warm for him during his childhood.

From a worldly point of view, Mary Bolton was not making much of a match, for, beyond having a "handle to his name," Lord Thurlow had very little else. Still, for a peer, he had no vices, other than a passion for writing minor poetry. His Muse (which found an outlet in the hospitable columns of the *Gentleman's Magazine*) was not of a lofty order, and was savagely cut up by Tom Moore in the *Edinburgh*. But he brought this on himself, for his meaning (when there happened to be one) was apt to be obscure. Thus, Byron, to whom he

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had submitted some of them, wrote of his efforts in stinging fashion:

“When Thurlow this damned nonsense sent
(I hope I am not violent)
Nor men nor gods knew what he meant.”

William Carpenter, that sturdy democrat of bygone days (he would now probably be called a communist), was still more caustic. Thus, referring to him in his *Peerage for the People*, he has the following entry:

“The propensity of the late Lord for ‘verse-making’ was most unfortunate for himself, and for a host of creditors to boot. Printers’ and stationers’ bills accumulated in the most unthinking manner; and the poor Lord, under perpetual apprehension of bailiffs’ visits, was obliged for several years to live without having a thing about him he could call his own.”

With, however, characteristic and greasy sycophancy, he was declared by somebody else to be “first and foremost a poet, a past master in the art of writing polished verses;” and a reviewer, anxious to curry favour, asserted of one of his efforts that “it should ensure for him the loftiest distinction.”

But, despite this pæan, the laurels of the bard were not for Lord Thurlow. He lived aimlessly and blamelessly until 1829; and his wife only survived him by a year.

6

Even with Lavinia Fenton and Mary Bolton transformed respectively into a duchess and a baroness, *The Beggar’s Opera* had not finished providing brides for peers. It was yet to contribute a countess. This was Catherine Stephens, the daughter of a picture-framer, with premises in the aristocratic neighbourhood of Grosvenor Square.

Like Mary Bolton, Catherine Stephens, who was born in 1794, was specially trained for the lyric stage. She had

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a beautiful flexible voice of rare quality, and spent five years under the tuition of good masters. Her first experience was on the concert platform in the provinces, after which she went to London and joined the Italian Opera Company. There she was so successful that when the evergreen *Beggar's Opera* was once more revived in 1813 she was engaged for Polly Peachum. Her initial salary was twelve pounds a week. Within two years it was doubled. Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt were enthusiastic about her, and the latter declared that "her performances leave all competitors far behind." Macready, too (who was never lavish in his praise of anyone), refers to her in his diary as "also a considerable actress," and naively adds, "with whom I had once been in love."

Catherine Stephens inspired passion in other breasts than that of Macready. During a period of fifteen years an unknown admirer attended every performance she gave, both in London and elsewhere. After sitting enraptured in a box he would, on the fall of the curtain, rush round to the stage door to see her leave in her carriage. The fact that this devotion was unrequited had an unhappy effect on him, and he ended his days in Bedlam.

The only jarring note was struck by the critic of the *European Magazine*. "We do not," he said, "care to see an amiable girl in such a character." Still, he added that her assumption of it "affords another proof that the highest professional eminence, even in a female, is not inconsistent with the most refined manners and the purest virtue."

Such testimony was not unmerited, for nobody, either on or off the stage, could have been more circumspect than Catherine Stephens. Where she was concerned the voice of scandal never raised a whisper. "The excellence of her life," says Mrs. Baron Wilson, "is proved by the fact that neither envy, hatred nor malice (too often found within the walls of a theatre) ever framed an accusation against her. She lived in the bosom of her family; and, in her professional engagements, was



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always attended either by her very gentlemanly brother, or her sedate, but handsome and accomplished niece."

The domestic watch-dogs certainly did their work; and it looked as if Catherine Stephens had no thoughts beyond her theatrical career, in which she went from triumph to triumph, both in London and in the provinces. Yet it was not for want of offers that she remained single, for her "very gentlemanly brother" had not (even with the help of the "sedate, but handsome and accomplished niece") kept wooers at arm's length. "Nobles," says a chronicler, "had sighed and gentiles [sic] had told their love"; and she could have made a dozen dazzling matches, among the aspirants for her hand being, it is said, the Duke of Devonshire and Lord Milton. But, "vowing she would die unwed," she turned a deaf ear to all proposals. Still, exercising the privilege of her sex, she changed her mind at last. The man who won her was George Capell Coningsby, fifth Earl of Essex. In the spring of 1838 she married him at his house in Belgrave Square, and retired from the theatre she had adorned with such distinction.

The public were inconsolable at the loss of their favourite. "Kitty Stephens" had entwined herself so firmly in their affections that her withdrawal into private life was looked upon as a calamity. A poet, voicing the general opinion, added an extra verse to another bard's effort:

"Last of this dear, delightful list—
Most followed, wondered at, and missed
In Hymen's odds and evens—
Old Essex caged our nightingale,
And finished thy theoric tale,
Enchanting Kitty Stephens."

On the face of it, perhaps, this union with "Old Essex" appeared an oddly-assorted one. Catherine Stephens herself was no longer in the first flush of girlhood (she could see forty-five peeping round the corner, and was "inclined to *embonpoint*"), while her husband was eighty and a widower. Still, the octogenarian lover,

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if lacking the fire and passion of a long-past youth, none the less had his qualities. Indeed, Sydney Smith declared him to be “affable, open-hearted, unaffected, and a good husband in the highest degree.” Unfortunately he was not spared very long to exhibit these qualities, as he died twelve months after this second and belated visit to the altar. Still, he lived long enough for his bride “to witness the ceremonial of the Queen’s coronation, where she attracted much attention.”

It is an error to expect too much in this world. Catherine Stephens had certainly done well for herself, since, when only forty-six, she was a widow and a dowager countess, with a jointure of six thousand pounds a year and a mansion in Belgrave Square. She died in 1882, at the age of eighty-eight.

7

In thus furnishing the peerage with a duchess, a countess, and a baroness, *The Beggar’s Opera* established a record not yet eclipsed by any one drama, whatever its technical description.

But with the passage of time the world behind the footlights has not stood still. The torch lit by Lavinia Fenton has been carried on by a long list of other theatrical favourites. Conspicuous among those standing out in this gallery are Louisa Brunton, Maria Foote, Elizabeth Farren and Eliza O’Neill, who, when George III was King, blossomed respectively into the Countess of Craven, the Countess of Harrington, the Countess of Derby, and Lady Becher with, *longo intervallo*, a score of others.

As in the past, so in the present. To give, however, anything approximating a complete history of the modern alliances between the stage and the peerage would almost fill a volume in itself. Besides, it has already been done; and a *livre d’or*, as it were, on the subject is to hand in the carefully documented work, “Peeresses and the Stage,” by Cranstoun Metcalfe.

THIRD BARON CARRINGTON
'The Peer and the Pressman'

THIRD BARON CARRINGTON

THE PEER AND THE PRESSMAN

I

ON a June morning in 1869 the London papers had an intriguing paragraph, headed, “Fracas among West-end Clubmen!” The actual names were not given, the principals in the “fracas” being simply described as a “well-known peer and an equally well-known journalist.” Later editions, however, declared the couple to be Lord Carrington and Mr. Grenville Murray.

This was distinctly “news”; and the public, all agog with excitement, eagerly devoured it. According to the first hurried accounts Lord Carrington had on the previous evening gone to the Conservative Club in St. James’s Street, and there, for some unknown reason, assaulted one of the members, Mr. Grenville Murray, with a dog-whip. As a consequence of this the latter was said to have issued a summons against him.

At first public sympathy was with Mr. Murray. When, however, fresh particulars were to hand, the affair assumed another complexion; and it was then generally felt that Lord Carrington was quite justified, since his action was the outcome of a scurrilous article which the journalist had published on his father.

Grenville Murray, who seemed strangely fond of the limelight, had forwarded to the Press his own account of the alleged assault inflicted on him, and this account ran as follows:

“When I was coming out of the Conservative Club a young man in a white coat stopped me and

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asked my name. He then said he was Lord Carrington, and struck a blow at my hat without warning. He was accompanied by a stalwart confederate who looked like a fighting-man. The person calling himself Lord Carrington followed me into the club, and there said, 'You have written in your paper against my father.' I said, 'I have done no such thing. I have no paper.' At this he looked very scared and went away."

The Committee of the Conservative Club, regarding the squabble on their premises as calculated to bring that sober establishment into disrepute, requested Grenville Murray to furnish them with a fuller explanation. The one he supplied took a lofty tone:

"I am not aware," he wrote back, "of any conduct of mine that is likely to endanger the good order and welfare of the club. I am accused of the authorship of certain newspaper articles. I deny their authorship, and I decline to enter further into the subject with the Committee . . . Lord Carrington, acting upon an erroneous impression, so far forgot the respect due to himself and to me as to offer me a cowardly affront. I felt that more than ordinary forbearance was required from a man of my years to a weak and intemperate youth.

"The next day, accordingly, I requested an apology. Lord Carrington, who is a peer of the realm and a magistrate, refused to express any regret at having committed a breach of the law, and he discovered a firm of solicitors who were not ashamed to communicate a fact so discreditable to himself . . . I am determined to ascertain what a cool and resolute man, who feels neither anger nor resentment, ought to do if he has a vulgar quarrel thrust upon him, and whether a noisy lad can be imported into a lawsuit to dispose of the plaintiff in a street riot . . . If you exclude me from the club your decision will have a baneful

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influence on the code of private honour accepted throughout the civilised world."

The Committee were not much impressed by this high-falutin' rigmarole. They happened to know more of the matter than appeared on the surface. This was discussed at a general meeting, the result of which was to expel Grenville Murray from membership of the club, on the grounds that his conduct was "unbecoming."

2

In the summer of 1869 Lord Carrington, who had recently inherited the family title, was a young man of twenty-six, having been born in 1843. From Eton he went to Cambridge, graduating at Trinity College. After a couple of years in a militia regiment he was gazetted to a cornetcy in the Household Cavalry. Five years later, having succeeded his father as third Baron, he retired from the service, with the rank of captain, to devote himself to politics, the various country pursuits incumbent upon his position, and management of his estates in Buckinghamshire. Horse and hound appealed to him strongly, and he hunted for several seasons at Melton. But it was as a whip he was best known in sporting circles, and he soon became a prominent member of the Four-in-Hand and Coaching Clubs. In this capacity his fondness for "the road" led him to take charge of the London to Windsor coach, driving his own team of chestnuts.

The occupation surely seemed innocent enough. Yet Grenville Murray had made it a peg for a gross attack on Lord Carrington and his family. This appeared in a weekly journal called the *Queen's Messenger*, of which he was understood to be the proprietor, and took the form of an anonymous article, "Our Hereditary Legislators. Bob Jarvey, Lord Coachington." It began with an outrageous allusion to Lord Carrington's father,

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who had only been dead a few months, and followed this up with a number of other offensive passages:

“ . . . It is quite unnecessary to add that he was, of course, Lord-Lieutenant and first magistrate of an important county, with the power of appointing other magistrates after his own heart; and that he was a Colonel and a Fellow of the Royal Society, and anything and everything else which he pleased to be.

“ . . . Bob’s family name was in no way remarkable. It was, in truth, Smith, but he changed it for that of Coachington. There was no apparent reason why he should have done so. His father had been made a baron because he was a banker; and an Irish baron because he was born and bred at Nottingham. They came of a race of tradesmen, and inherited the instincts of tradesmen.

“ . . . It is not an absolute impossibility that the remote posterity of a banker may be elevated into gentlemen by a long series of fortunate circumstances. When they have for several ages given up over-reaching their neighbours; when they have become purified from the contamination of their fellow-hucksters, and have been taught the principles of noblemen by their new kindred, they may in time be educated well enough to fill the lesser offices of State without discredit; but the experiment must be very carefully made, and the result is always doubtful. To take a bargaining bumpkin, with his pedlar’s nature quite raw, and give the rogue two coronets in one year because a minister’s mistress is an extravagant queen who wants money, is a very shocking outrage upon decency. What can fairly be said of such a naughty transformation trick, and what can possibly be expected from such a stock but a progeny of monomaniacs and lackeys?

“ . . . No society of sensible patriots ever got hold of Bob Smith. He paid his pence, and he got his peerages. So by and by, after a hundred years or so

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of the very funniest legislation conceivable, there is a merry sight to be seen every afternoon in Piccadilly. The grandson of the Nottinghamshire nobody has put his lordship in the pocket whence it came, and irresponsible Nature has reasserted her motherly rights over him.

“ . . . But the present Bob Smith is a sturdier churl. He knows his proper place in life, and is resolved to take it. In full view of his Sovereign’s palace, in the high street of the greatest city of the greatest empire of the world, one of our hereditary legislators is to be found touching his hat for hire as a driver of a public coach.

“ . . . It may be good for them thereafter to bethink themselves that this horsey man is supreme over our hearths and altars; that he has seven sets of souls in his gift or sale; and that he may any day chance to have a casting vote for peace or war.”

Lord Carrington had strong grounds for objecting to this vulgar screed. It undoubtedly aspersed his family, for it happened to be quite true that his late father had been a lord-lieutenant and a colonel; and that his grandfather, a Nottinghamshire banker who had begun life as Robert Smith, had also been elevated to the peerage as an Irish baron. Hence, it was entirely obvious that the whole article was aimed at himself and was deliberately intended to hold him up to ridicule.

Understanding that Grenville Murray was responsible for the authorship, Lord Carrington resolved to call him to account. Since, however, he did not know him by sight, he procured a copy of his photograph. With this in one pocket and a dog-whip in the other he went to St. James’s Street and waited outside the Conservative Club, of which establishment his traducer was a member. As soon as he saw him on the steps there, he ran up and struck him. Thereupon Grenville Murray rushed back and told the astonished hall-porter to fetch a policeman. His assailant (of whose identity he was unaware) then

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followed him into the club, and said, "I am Lord Carrington. You have written in your paper against my father. If you want to see me again you know where to find me."

Dog-whip or no dog-whip, Grenville Murray did want to see him again. First of all, though, he saw his own solicitor, whom he instructed to take out a summons for assault. This was issued, and the preliminary proceedings were heard at Marlborough Street on 7th July 1869 before Mr. D'Eyncourt. The case attracted immense public interest; and among those sitting beside the magistrate were the Duke of Beaufort, the Marquis of Blandford, the Marquis of Worcester, the Marquis Townshend, Lord Bingham, and Lord Colville. Lord Carrington was accompanied by his brother, and Grenville Murray by Mrs. Murray. Mr. Gill and Montagu Williams appeared for the plaintiff, and the defendant had the services of a future Lord Chancellor in Hardinge Giffard, Q.C.

In addition to the assault there was a second charge preferred by the prosecutor. This was for "maliciously, unlawfully, wilfully and wickedly uttering certain provoking, malicious and scandalous words, with intent to instigate, incite and provoke him to fight a duel."

3

The full name of the journalist who thus attracted so much limelight was Eustace Clare Grenville Murray. He was undoubtedly a man possessed of talents, which, if misdirected, were distinctly above the average. Edmund Yates, who met him at a dinner-party given by that clerical mountebank, the Rev. J. M. Bellew (otherwise Higgin) has left a portrait of him: "A man in person small, with dark complexion and curly hair beginning to turn grey; in manner vivacious and fascinating, glib of speech, felicitous in illustration and conversable on all topics." Julian Hawthorne also refers to him in his volume of reminiscences, *Shapes That Pass*: "A

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strange, sardonic, captivating creature. . . . He was a small, dark man, highly cultivated, dressed in black, with a heavy gold watch-chain and diamond studs . . . A poignant romance of the first half of the nineteenth century could be written round him."

Born in 1824, Grenville Murray had good blood in his veins. But there was a bar sinister on the paternal side, for he happened to be an illegitimate son of that "very Duke of very Dukes," the second Duke of Buckingham and Chandos. Educated at Oxford, he had as a youth held a commission in an Austrian cavalry regiment. Having, however, no liking for discipline—whether military or otherwise—he only stopped there a couple of years. On returning to England, Palmerston jobbed him into the diplomatic service (in those easy-going days such things were done without awkward questions being asked) and he was sent to Vienna as attaché. There he infringed the Foreign Office regulations (which disapproved of its members combining diplomacy with journalism) by contributing to the *Morning Post*, the recognised Palmerstonian organ of that era.

Lord Westmorland, the British ambassador in Vienna, was furious at this breach of etiquette, and peremptorily demanded his dismissal. Thereupon Murray, who had "influence," pulled another string and got himself transferred to Constantinople. It was not a good choice, for he was soon in hot water there with Sir Stratford Canning (afterwards Lord Stratford de Redclyffe), who promptly had him shifted to Mytilene. Disliking this banishment, he took an adequate revenge on his able but peppery chief by caricaturing him as "Sir Hector Stubble" in a sketch which, at the instance of W. H. Wills, was accepted by Dickens and published in *Household Words*; and Lord Westmorland, who happened to be an amateur violinist of some ability, was "Lord Fiddle-de-dee."

Such conduct on the part of a very junior subordinate was held to savour of *lèse-majesté*, if nothing worse. The wrath of Canning was prodigious. He moved heaven

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and earth and Downing Street combined to get the unwelcome attaché out of the country; and at last succeeded in having him sent to the legation at Teheran. But there was more trouble there, and he was soon moved on to Odessa as Consul-General. This appointment, it was thought (and hoped) would keep him quiet, especially as it carried a salary of nine hundred pounds a year.

But nothing could keep Grenville Murray quiet for long. His wings were only clipped. He proved as big a nuisance in South Russia as anywhere else, and he was always at loggerheads with the British colony. The result was, when Lord Stanley became Foreign Secretary commissioners were sent out from England to hold an official enquiry into his conduct; and, on their report, his appointment was cancelled. Thereupon he hurried to England and demanded "redress." As none was forthcoming he instructed his solicitors to bring an action against Lord Stanley. He did not, however, proceed with it, as the counsel he had engaged decided to return his brief.

Once free of official restrictions, the ex-attaché embarked upon journalism as a regular source of livelihood. The brand he affected was what would now be known as "personal." and he discovered a ready opening in *Vanity Fair*, which had just been founded. His pen being fluent and his tongue bitter, he soon wanted a wider field. As none existed he established a paper called the *Queen's Messenger*. Conducted nominally by his son, Reginald, this was really edited (and in great part written) by himself. A particularly offensive feature was a series of vulgar lampoons, in which well-known people were held up to ridicule. In order, however, to avoid reprisals, the names were disguised. But the disguises were so thin as to be transparent. Thus, the Duke of Cambridge was the "Duke of Fairbrother"; the Duke of Hamilton was the "Duke of Gambleton"; and the Marquis of Waterford was the "Marquis of Gutterford."

Sir Edward Hertslet, who was for many years libra-

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rian of the Foreign Office, has something to say about this production:

“On January 21, 1869, the first number of a new weekly periodical appeared. The price was sixpence, and the title which it bore was *The Queen's Messenger*. Its main object was to heap abuse upon certain Foreign Office officials, the Secretary of State and Under Secretaries being among the number. . . . No attempt was made to conceal the names of the individuals against whom these attacks were made, and such epithets as ‘thief,’ ‘criminal,’ ‘trickery,’ ‘fraud,’ and the like were freely used. . . . No notice having been taken of these scurrilous and abusive attacks by those who were the objects of them, the editor became bolder, and, extending his sphere of action, attacked others outside the Foreign Office.”

Scurrilous though much of it was, since it was obviously modelled on the long-defunct *Age* and *Satirist*, the newcomer yet had its points. Thus, it directed a valuable searchlight on abuses that a sycophantic and timid Press had entered into a conspiracy to ignore, and by reason of its freshness and vigour struck a note that was badly wanted. Among its warm admirers was that arch-enemy of humbug, Charles Gordon. “I own,” he says in his *Journal*, “to having read with pleasure the *Queen's Messenger* till Lord Carrington stopped its publication.”

Described in characteristically grandiloquent fashion as “Weekly Gazette of Politics and Literature,” the *Queen's Messenger* bore the motto, “Ho, all ye who have suffered Wrong!” This, of course, was obviously intended to convey that its special purpose was to ventilate abuses occurring in the public service. Lest, however, there should be any doubt on the subject, a standing paragraph invited readers to contribute “examples of nepotism, corruption, oppression or injustice in any Government department.”

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The editor need not have applied to the public for "copy." He himself had an inexhaustible stock of grievances of his own, and filled columns of each issue with venomous attacks on everybody against whom he nursed a grudge. There were many of them, especially among the Foreign Office bureaucrats. But the Home Office, the Colonial Office, the War Office, the Admiralty, and the Treasury all came equally under his lash; and such epithets as "thief," "criminal" and "trickster" occurred on every page.

"A scamp, a dolt, a dunce," he wrote in the first number, "has at least as good a chance or prospect in public life as those who are honest, gifted and capable." To this pronouncement he added, "there can no longer be any doubt that the Foreign Policy of this country has been guided by a lunatic."

The editor's bitterest invectives, however, were reserved for Lord Stanley, father and son (always called by him "Lord Fusby" and "Lord Barabbas, M.P."), while poor Lord Clarendon, then at the head of the Foreign Office, was roundly accused of "duplicity" and "nepotism." With reference to this latter charge, there was, perhaps, just a shade of justification, as young relatives of departmental chiefs certainly seemed to tumble into snug billets without exhibiting any special gifts for them. But Grenville Murray's chief grievance against him was that he held him responsible for the reimposition of an income tax. This, as it happened, was only twopence in the pound.

"If anything stated in these pages," he announced grandiloquently, "is untrue, the family connection engaged in deluding [*sic*] us have the law of libel to protect them, and most assuredly they would make use of it if they dared."

Well, one of them, Lord Carrington, did "dare."

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The summons against Lord Carrington was heard at Marlborough Street police-court. As soon as the proceedings began there was an undignified wrangle among the counsel on either side:

“I do not know what my learned friend will prove,” observed Mr. Giffard, who seemed confident that it would be very little.

“I shall prove everything I state,” declared Mr. Gill.

“But you cannot give evidence of it here.”

“I am not giving evidence,” was the retort. “I am opening my case, and I shall conduct it as I please.”

As a result, perhaps, of this passage the plaintiff was very severely handled by Hardinge Giffard, who was determined to extract from him an admission that he edited the *Queen's Messenger* and wrote for it regularly. But, advised by his counsel, Grenville Murray refused point-blank to answer any questions on the subject. All he would say was that he was not responsible for the “Bob Coachington” article.

“Is this in your handwriting?” persisted Mr. Giffard suddenly producing the original manuscript from a bundle of others, which, much to his discomfiture, and without his knowledge, had been obtained from the editorial sanctum.

“On my word of honour, it is not,” was the dramatic response. “I say I would rather have cut off my right hand than have written some of the things you have there.”

“I am assuming,” observed the other, addressing the magistrate, “that Mr. Murray answers my questions truthfully.”

“I do,” was the heated reply, “and when we are outside I will pull your nose if you say I do not.”

Not caring, apparently, to run this risk, Mr. Giffard dropped the subject. He was soon, however, crossing swords again.

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“I withdraw the observation,” he remarked presently, when he slipped on a small point. “I made a mistake.”

“I am glad you acknowledge it,” returned the witness sarcastically.

“Did you write this article in the *Queen's Messenger* about Lord Carrington?” persisted Mr. Giffard.

“I did not.”

“Do you know who wrote it?”

“I do not know.”

“Where is your son, Reginald?” was the next question, for it had been submitted by the other side that this individual was the real editor.

“I don't know. I think he's in Paris.”

“You think so? But you took him there yourself, didn't you?”

“I refuse to answer.”

“Is the witness to set the law at defiance?” demanded counsel hotly. The magistrate, unable to solve the problem, took refuge in examining some specimens of the *Queen's Messenger* (in one of which was a particularly scurrilous attack on the Duke of Cambridge) which were then handed up to him. This organ of “politics and literature” did not seem to have a very large sale among the public, as only a hundred copies of the current issue had been printed.

“Were you,” enquired Mr. D'Eyncourt, when he had finished reading the specimens, “directly or indirectly privy to the various passages which here apply to Lord Carrington?”

“No, I was not,” was the emphatic response.

Mr. Gill, having intimated that this was his case, asked that Lord Carrington should be bound over to keep the peace. Thereupon Hardinge Giffard addressed the magistrate. He was, he said, instructed to declare that the prosecutor's evidence was a “tissue of falsehood.” Still, he would submit to his Worship's decision. This was promptly given, the defendant being bound over in respect of the assault, and committed to the Sessions on the charge of “inciting.” He was then

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granted bail in two sureties of two thousand pounds each and a personal one of nine thousand pounds.

This concluded the case for the time being; and Lord Carrington's solicitor began in methodical fashion to deposit his papers in a tin box. Among these papers were the original manuscripts of certain articles which had appeared in the *Queen's Messenger*, and which Grenville Murray declared had been purloined from the office. While the solicitor was packing them up an extraordinary outbreak suddenly occurred. Without the slightest warning a crowd of onlookers, "including noble lords and honourable gentlemen," surged round him and endeavoured to snatch the papers from his grasp. The attempt being resisted, a general *mélée* arose, and something like a free fight ensued. Policemen, ushers, gaolers, barristers, solicitors, clerks, witnesses and the public generally all joined in the struggle, in which Colonel Campbell (afterwards Lord Blythswood) took a leading part. During the course of this, desks and chairs were upset, books and inkstands were hurled at the combatants, hats and umbrellas damaged, and blows and kicks exchanged with impartiality among the supporters of either side. The shocked and angry magistrate was helpless, and his threats to commit everybody for "contempt" were responded to with ribald jeers. At last a stalwart inspector forced his way at the head of a body of police into this mixture of Bedlam and a bear-garden, and a number of arrests were made. As, however, nearly everybody whose name was taken promptly declared himself to be a member of the peerage, it ended in only one person—a young subaltern—being hauled off to the cells. In the meantime the constables went to the solicitor's rescue, and by dint of flourishing their batons managed to secure the box which had been the original cause of the disturbance.

"The Marquis Townshend," says Montagu Williams, "retired hastily, with as much dignity as circumstances would permit, into a private room."

A barrister who happened to be present wrote a

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picturesque (if slightly exaggerated) version of this attempted "Rape of the Box."

"After a lot of conflicting evidence had been heard, including a counter-charge of perjury against the prosecutor, the magistrate adjourned the case. Scarcely had he announced his intention to do so, when a rush was made by some of Murray's friends for a box which it was alleged contained MSS stolen from the *Queen's Messenger* offices, and intended to be used in evidence in the perjury charge. Around that box there raged for, I suppose, nearly a quarter of an hour a fight as fierce and fell as that for the body of Patroclus or that described by Macaulay in the 'Lays' over the corpse of Valerius. Noble lords, eminent Queen's Counsel, solicitors, clerks, witnesses, to the number of thirty or forty, were engaged in that desperate *mélée*. Personally, having no special interest in the proceedings, I kept neutral on the fringe of the fray. Hats were smashed, eyes blackened, noses set bleeding, glasses broken, inkstands hurled to and fro, till at last a strong body of police quelled the riot and ejected the furious combatants. Sir Hardinge Giffard, who had been in the thick of the fighting, using his fists vigorously, emerged from Court with flushed, bruised, perspiring face, and shirt-front drenched in ink. The magistrate, Mr. Knox, if I remember rightly,* looked aghast and horror-stricken from the Bench at such a scene as, I should imagine, has never been witnessed before or since in any English Court of Justice."

The Press comments on this deplorable affair were very caustic. Among them, those of the *Tomahawk* were particularly scarifying:

"Such a scandal as this Carrington-Murray business may not be a desirable or pleasant thing; and friends, partisans, and sympathisers generally may be excused for a display of unusual warmth in defence of

* He remembered wrongly. The magistrate was Mr. D'Eyncourt.



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their respective interests. But all excuse ends here. That a British Court of Justice should be turned into a bear-garden, and the very administration of the law fairly outraged by a parcel of excited men, whose petty personal and private concerns have for the moment obtruded themselves into the charge-sheet, is a disgrace and a scandal that should not be shelved away with a mere indignant protest or smoothed down by a silly laugh."

A curious organ of public opinion, the *Illustrated Police News*, also had a solemn leader on the subject:

"Here then we have a little food for meditation on some of the characteristics of our age; and we confess it seems to afford some alarming indications that the spirit of lawlessness and unscrupulousness is spreading from the rougher layer of society into the loftier regions of the Upper Ten Thousand . . . These furnish food for reflection, which, we confess, is not pleasant to us, and we think it will not be generally agreeable to our readers."

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Resolved not to let slip a chance that had offered itself, Lord Carrington, while waiting to appear at the Sessions to which he had been remanded, made the next move. This was to take out a summons against Grenville Murray for "wilful and corrupt perjury" in denying his connection with the *Queen's Messenger*. and the authorship of any of the articles published in it. This summons was also heard at Marlborough Street. This time, however, there was another magistrate on the Bench, Mr. Knox; and by him the situation was handled very differently.

As on the previous occasion, the proceedings attracted an immense amount of public attention. Half the peerage and aristocracy suddenly seemed to have business in the little Court; and the Duke of Sutherland, the

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Marquis Townshend, the Earl of March, and Lord George Lennox were privileged to sit beside the magistrate, while smaller fry, such as mere generals and admirals and politicians, etc., were accommodated at the solicitors' table. Less important people were crammed into the back benches; and still less important ones, determined to secure standing-room somewhere, even overflowed into the dock.

Mr. Gill began by suggesting that the hearing should be adjourned until the charge on which Lord Carrington stood committed had been definitely decided. The magistrate, however, refused to sanction this step, and as a result of his ruling the case proceeded.

The first fresh evidence to be heard was that of the printer of the *Queen's Messenger*. This witness, Peter Ranken, established the important fact that Grenville Murray had given him an indemnity; and also that, notwithstanding his emphatic denials, he had corrected the proofs of various articles appearing in its columns and undertaken the general functions of editor. Questioned about the indemnity, Mr. Ranken, who was Scotch and cautious, said he had demanded one "because some of the articles were rather strong." One such that had specially disturbed him dealt with the family history and public career of Lord Stanley, who was described as "Lord Barabbas, M.P."

"Didn't you know that counsel's opinion had been taken on it?" enquired Mr. Gill.

"Yes, I did."

"Well, wasn't that enough for you?"

"No, it wasn't."

"Then, you don't think much of counsel's opinion, I'm afraid."

"The trouble is, in this case it was overruled. You see, I took a second opinion."

The printer was followed into the box by the paper's publisher. This witness, John Hughes, swore that Grenville Murray had represented himself as editor;

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and that to his certain knowledge he had contributed the "Lord Barabbas" article.

At this point the magistrate, announcing that that case would probably have to go for trial, adjourned the court until the end of the week. In doing so he ordered Grenville Murray to give two sureties in two hundred and fifty pounds each for his attendance at the next hearing.

During the adjournment Lord Carrington, who had briefed Sir John Coleridge (Solicitor-General), surrendered at the Clerkenwell Sessions House, where Sir William Bodkin, the assistant-judge, presided over a full bench of magistrates, reinforced by the presence of two peers, a general, and a colonel. In anticipation of another "scene" the court was crowded to its utmost capacity; and among the throng in which Mayfair was mixed up with Mile End were several Members of Parliament. Sir John Coleridge's brief was marked five hundred guineas. "That circumstance," said Lord Carrington in after years, "frightened me much more than did the learned judge."

The grand jury having thrown out the rather ridiculous charge of "inciting to a duel," the only matter left to be dealt with was the alleged "assault." There was some sharp discussion as to whether this had not already been disposed of by the Marlborough Street magistrate. The learned judge, however, ruled to the contrary, and declared that, as the defendant had only been bound over, the case must be heard. Thereupon Lord Carrington pleaded "not guilty."

In his preliminary address Mr. Gill characterised the assault as "cowardly and dastardly, committed on an unarmed gentleman unsuspectingly leaving his club." He would ask the court, he said, "to inflict such punishment as should actually be a punishment, and not a mere nominal fine, for which Lord Carrington would not care."

The photograph from which Lord Carrington had recognised Grenville Murray had, it transpired in the

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course of the evidence, been lent him for the purpose by a tailor's assistant from Poole's. This individual, on being asked how he got it, said that "he collected the photographs of celebrities." As a matter of fact, however, the accommodating Snip had borrowed it from Murray's valet.

Mr. John Bidwell, a member of the Foreign Office staff, whose wife had been attacked in the columns of the *Queen's Messenger*, attended under a subpœna. In calling him, the plaintiff had made a bad choice, for he was clearly hostile. At any rate, he seemed to have a very poor opinion of Grenville Murray.

"Would you believe Mr. Murray on his oath?" he was asked.

"No, I would not," was the damaging retort. "I have already told him that he was a liar, and the biggest blackguard in all England."

The plaintiff then went into the box, and there repeated his version of the assault. It was corroborated by the hall-porter and a page-boy from the Conservative Club. A question was put to the latter, a diminutive youth of thirteen, as to his politics.

"I have been a Tory all my life," he declared emphatically, thus establishing the fact that Whiggism was not tolerated on any part of the club premises, even below stairs.

The Solicitor-General, who was resolved to get a definite answer, where Hardinge Giffard had failed, put a direct question to Grenville Murray.

"Did you or did you not," he demanded, "write anything at all in the *Queen's Messenger* about Lord Carrington?"

"I decline to tell you," said Murray, who was equally determined not to answer any direct question.

"Why?"

"Because there has been an attempt to convict me of perjury on the evidence of manuscripts that have been stolen from the editor's office. That's why."

The judge, however, would not have this; and pointed

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out that, unless he feared the consequences would incriminate him, he must answer. Thereupon the witness, feeling himself in a tight corner, altered his tone.

“I do fear the consequences,” he said. “There is a false charge of perjury against me. I want to know what a poor man can do against a rich man? All the Bar of England is against me. I am poor and defenceless. I haven’t a shilling in the world. Any gentleman connected with the Press might find himself in my unhappy position.”

“So, then, you *are* connected with the Press, after all?” exclaimed Sir John, seizing the opening thus offered.

“I won’t tell you,” returned the other, realising his slip.

The Solicitor-General let it pass, and went on to something else. Grenville Murray had said he had “withdrawn” from the Conservative Club. Counsel’s information was that the committee, obviously holding gutter-journalism to be a bar to membership, had expelled him. He even had the figures, the voting on the subject being two hundred to ten. “A good working majority,” was his dry comment. He then read out various portions from the “Bob Coachington” article which had appeared in the *Queen’s Messenger*. He might, however, have spared himself the trouble, for, as hitherto, the other refused to answer any question about it. “I take refuge in silence,” he declared grandiloquently.

“Why do you do that, Mr. Murray?”

“Because I am no match for you,” was the retort.

6

Although he was only a stuff gownsman, Mr. Gill was as ready to stand up to the great Sir John Coleridge as he had been to Hardinge Giffard. He accordingly replied to the Solicitor-General in a vigorous speech. It was a good effort, but a wasted one, for he was merely beating the air. His first point was that permission to

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put in a letter written by Lord Carrington, "who ought to have come to clear his character, before a jury," had been improperly withheld on a plea of "privilege." There was nothing, he said, to connect his client with the authorship of the "Bob Coachington" article, and still less to justify the assault that had been committed on him. The defendant chose to consider the article as applicable to himself and to hold Mr. Murray responsible for it. If, however, he felt himself injured by that article, he should have instituted legal proceedings. The assault was clearly proved, and Lord Carrington had never denied it until that day, when he pleaded "not guilty." Still, added counsel, "it is only due to him to say that this plea, prompted by the Solicitor-General, stuck in his throat when he uttered it."

The "last word" was with the Solicitor-General. He made the most of it, and began by telling the jury that, "without doing any violence to their consciences they would find Lord Carrington's conduct all through the affair to be that of a "nobleman and a man of honour." Still, he said, if they thought an assault had been committed, they must, of course, bring in a verdict to that effect. His client, however, he said, did not fear any view they might take. The plaintiff had never denied that a series of most malignant and disreputable articles appeared in the *Queen's Messenger*, and it was proved he had given the printer an indemnity on account of them. Also he had fenced in the witness-box, and refused to answer questions that an innocent man would have been glad to answer. As a result of this disgraceful attack on his family, Lord Carrington, a young man of twenty-six, found himself held up to ridicule and placarded all over London. It was Lord Carrington, he declared, in a final passage, who had really been assaulted, and the "true criminal" was Grenville Murray.

Sir William Bodkin, evidently thinking the case had gone on long enough and had had far too much importance attached to it, summed up very briefly. The jury, being of the same opinion, only retired for half an hour.

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"Gentlemen, are you agreed upon your verdict?" enquired the deputy clerk, when they reappeared in the box.

"We are," returned the foreman.

"How say you then? Do you find Charles Robert, Lord Carrington, guilty or not guilty?"

"We find him guilty of a common assault, committed under circumstances of the strongest provocation."

It was the verdict everybody had expected. There was a moment's pause. Then Sir William Bodkin—trying to look much more severe than he really felt, addressed the defendant, who took his stand in front of the dock.

"The jury," he said, "have found you guilty, and I think they are quite right. You are answerable in the same way as the commonest person who takes the law into his own hands and commits a breach of it. I cannot, however, help feeling that the assault has arisen out of circumstances that must excite abhorrence in the breasts of all right-minded individuals. In the articles from which we have heard extracts, physical and mental incapacities, to which we are all liable in old age, have been made the subject of ruthless comment. The peace of families has been destroyed by these articles, and even the sanctity of the grave violated. Whether the prosecutor was the author or not, circumstances existed which justified you in believing that he was; and, under feelings of natural indignation, you did the act of which you have been found guilty. Still, no one, whatever his rank or position, can be permitted to violate the law. My duty is to prevent any recurrence of a breach of the peace. You, Lord Carrington, must, therefore, enter into your own recognisances in one hundred pounds to come up for judgment if called upon. If there should be no renewal of violence or breach of the peace, you may consider this unpleasant affair, so far as this court is concerned, as at an end."

Although a technical verdict had thus been delivered against him, Lord Carrington was none the less very

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heartily congratulated on the result. There had, it was generally felt, been nothing to his discredit in any part of the proceedings; and his conduct throughout had been that of a man of chivalry and honour. The general opinion, too, was that, at much annoyance to himself, he had performed a distinct public service, since, after what had happened, the purveyors of scandalous libels would have their activities checked. At any rate, it put an end to the *Queen's Messenger*.

7

The case, however, was not over yet, as the adjourned charge of perjury had still to be heard at Marlborough Street. When, on 29th July, the court reassembled there for this purpose, Grenville Murray did not appear. The reason given by his counsel was that he was ill in Paris, where he had gone to fetch back his son, Reginald, whose evidence he wanted. Although a medical certificate to this effect was produced, Mr. Knox, the magistrate who presided, thought so little of it that he issued a warrant for his arrest and estreated his bail.

A vigorous protest against this course of action was made by Mr. Gill. It had, however, no result, for the magistrate was firm.

“Your client,” he said, “is perfectly well aware what charge he has to meet. He is bound by the law. So, for that matter, am I. His recognisances are forfeited; his sureties are forfeited; and when he sets foot in England he will be arrested.”

As was only natural, this abrupt and dramatic finish to the proceedings stripped Grenville Murray of the last shred of repute.

“We trust,” observed one journal, with heavy sarcasm, “that Mr. Murray will not prolong his absence abroad a moment beyond what is required; and that his prompt return will render it unnecessary to enforce the warrant or to discuss the possibility of reclaiming him under the provisions of the Extradition Treaty . . . We

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hope that his health may speedily be so completely re-established as to permit him, without real inconvenience, to make the journey between Paris and London; and to dispel by his presence here any unfavourable impression which his inopportune absence may have temporarily occasioned."

The hope, however, was unfulfilled.

Yet, although he had made England too hot to hold him, Grenville Murray continued his activities from the sheltered seclusion to which he had withdrawn. Among a number of scurrilous volumes he wrote while there was one, *Sidelights on English Society*, which he had the impudence to dedicate to the Queen. In this he repeated his attacks on Lord Carrington, whom he now called "Lord Chousington," while Lord John Russell figured as "Lord John Bustle," and Lord Beaconsfield as the "Earl of Sparklemoor."

Times change. Nowadays this sort of thing would be considered rather childish. Yet that shrewd judge, Henry Labouchere, who saw a good deal of Grenville Murray at this period, had a high opinion of his ability. "Few of those," he wrote, "who may have seen him in an old felt hat, and a still older shooting-jacket, strolling along the boulevards, or in the alleys of the Bois de Boulogne, would have imagined that they were in the presence of the ablest journalist of the century."

While this, of course, was ridiculous (for, all said and done, he occupied a very small niche in anything that ranks as literature), the volume of Grenville Murray's work was none the less considerable. Altogether he published upwards of thirty books (some under pseudonyms), in addition to many hundreds of newspaper and magazine articles. His novel, *Young Brown* (much of which was autobiographical), made something of a sensation on its appearance in *Cornhill*; and during his Parisian exile he wrote regularly for the *Débats* and the *Figaro*, and also acted as correspondent for important London and New York papers. His journalistic output, indeed, was so large that he was always said to employ

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a number of “ghosts,” to whose activities he did not scruple to put his own name.

England saw no more of Grenville Murray. As he took care not to come back, the warrant for his arrest was never executed; and he remained an outlaw and an exile in France until his death, which occurred in 1881.

Grenville Murray was buried at Passy. The theory, to which he always subscribed, that he was of patrician birth is lent some colour by the florid inscription on his tombstone:

“In affectionate memory of Eustace Clare Grenville Murray, Comte de Rethel d’Aragon, son of Richard Plantagenet, Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, and Henriette Anne, Marchioness Strozzi. Born, October 2, 1818. Died, December 20, 1881. To this excellent man, his dutiful wife, Clara, Comtesse de Rethel d’Aragon, has erected this monument. ‘They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.’”

Although nothing more was heard of Grenville Murray, a great deal was heard of Lord Carrington, who died, full of years and honour, at the advanced age of eighty-five. At the time of his death, however, he was better known as the Marquis of Lincolnshire, to which dignity he was raised in 1912. During his long and useful public career he rendered many and distinguished services to his country; and among the important offices he discharged were those of Joint-Hereditary Lord Great Chamberlain of England; Lord Chamberlain of the Household; Governor of New South Wales; Lord Privy Seal; and President of the Board of Agriculture. He was also selected as Special Envoy to France, Spain, and Portugal to announce the accession of King Edward VII.

FIFTH COUNTESS OF CLANCARTY
Chorus to Coronet

FIFTH COUNTESS OF CLANCARTY

CHORUS TO CORONET

I

CASTE laws, once firmly embedded in our social system, have long been obsolescent. Since his Grace the Duke of Bolton set the example, the practice of members of the aristocracy selecting their wives from among the members of the chorus (or, at any rate, from among the humbler occupants of the theatrical world) has become such a commonplace that it has now quite ceased to be regarded as anything unusual. Still, some of these adventures in matrimony have caused more stir than others.

Among the modern examples of alliances of the stage and the peerage (through the medium of a wedding-ring), perhaps the one to attract most attention is that of the fifth Countess of Clancarty. But there was reason for this, since the union had repercussions in a divorce case of special interest to the public, viz., that of Dunlo v. Dunlo and Wertheimer.

Lady Dunlo (afterwards Countess of Clancarty) the respondent in this now almost historic *cause célèbre*, was more familiar to the public as Miss Belle Bilton, a music-hall singer and dancer with a big "following." She was born in 1868, and christened Isabel Maude Penrice. Her mother was an Irishwoman, of Co. Glamorgan, and her father was John George Bilton. What little is known of him is to his credit. He had worn the Queen's uniform, serving in the Royal Engineers and making his way to non-commissioned rank. On retiring with a small pension he secured employment in the dockyard at

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Woolwich, and at one time he also acted as a recruiting-sergeant.

A "daughter of the regiment," the early life of Belle Bilton was passed in the different barracks where her father happened to be quartered, and the bugle call and the roll of the drum were thoroughly familiar to her as a child. Being an exceptionally pretty girl and well-mannered, she was made much of by the officers and had friends among their children. When she was fourteen she had her introduction to the footlights; and, together with her younger sister Florence, she appeared in an amateur pantomime that was produced at the Garrison Theatre, Woolwich.

A theatrical agent who happened to be among the audience on this occasion was so struck by the promise the two girls exhibited that he suggested to their father that they should adopt the stage as a livelihood. Sergeant Bilton having no objection, they were taught singing and dancing. They did not learn their work in a "dramatic academy." They learned it touring in the provinces, as members of the chorus of a *Les Cloches de Corneville* company, with which they travelled from one town to another; and at Christmas 1881 they were booked for small parts in a pantomime at the Theatre Royal, Glasgow.

Gifted with youth, good looks, good voices and more than average talent, the two girls made rapid progress. Before long they were "discovered" by a magnate of the "variety" world, who brought them to London. There, as the "Sisters Bilton," they secured a firm foothold, singing and dancing their way into the hearts of the public; and in a very short time they became acknowledged "stars" at the Empire, the Alhambra, the Royal, and the Pavilion and wherever else they appeared. The fact that they drew thirty pounds a week between them was considered astonishing, for those were the days (and nights) of small salaries for even the most popular "turns." Their great song was one entitled "It's Fresh"! "This," remarked one critic, from whom no secrets were hid, "does not refer to butter."

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The music-hall world is a world of its own, with a code of manners and morals adapted to its special requirements. Belle Bilton, impetuous and popular (and, perhaps, a little careless) was not a good judge of men. Where one of them was concerned she made a slip; and she paid for it very dearly. What happened was, at the height of her success, she got into touch with a plausible scoundrel, Alden Weston, who dubbed himself "Baron de Loanda" and also declared himself to be an officer in the Army. The only "army," however, in which he served was the army of "crooks." Yet he must have had some odd fascination, since he induced Belle Bilton to sacrifice her career and become his mistress.

The *liaison* had not lasted long when, in March, 1888, it was shattered by the arrest of Alden Weston on a charge of conspiracy and fraud. Although sadly undeceived—the girl—she was not yet twenty—stuck to him. She borrowed money for his defence; and when he was sent to prison she wrote him comforting letters and even visited him there. It was not until she discovered that he was a married man with a wife and family whom he had deserted that her eyes were opened to his real character. But it was then too late to save herself from the consequences of her false step, for she was about to become a mother. Her position was then pitiable in the extreme. She had to give up her work, and with it her only source of income, and disappear from the public eye until her baby should be born.

But when things were at their darkest an unexpected hand was suddenly held out to her. On the day that Weston was convicted, Belle Bilton, not knowing which way to turn, met Isidor Wertheimer, a wealthy young Hebrew with an interest in a Bond Street picture-shop. He offered sympathy and practical help. He put a cottage in the country at her disposal; he engaged a doctor and nurse to attend to her during her confinement; and after the child was born he took her abroad for a much-needed rest and change of air and scene. It is true that

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they travelled together; but they did so under their own names, and not as a married couple.

When they were back in London, and Belle Bilton had taken up her music-hall career again, Isidor Wertheimer set her up in a house of his in St. John's Wood. That he knew her wretched story did not make any difference to him. He wanted to marry her, but she declined to accept this easy path out of her troubles. She felt instinctively that, after what had happened, his family would object to their unconventional union being regularised. They indeed did so and his parents regarded the suggestion with such strong disfavour that, in the hope of stopping it, they shipped their son off to New York.

It was during the period that Isidor Wertheimer was in America that Lord Dunlo came into Belle Bilton's life.

2

William Frederick le Poer Trench was born in 1868. When, in 1872, his father succeeded as fourth Earl of Clancarty, he was styled Viscount Dunlo. Educated (nominally) at Eton, he was intended for the Army. The necessary examination, however, simple as it was, proved a stumbling-block; and, despite repeated attempts, he failed to get into Sandhurst. Thereupon efforts were made to push him through the "back door," and he was given a commission in the Militia. But instead of going to camp he went to London, where he found hanging round clubs and bars and suburban race courses, and frequenting the society of jockeys and ladies of the ballet, much more attractive than inspecting kits and practising the goose-step.

As a man-about-town, young Lord Dunlo had naturally become a member of the Corinthian Club, an establishment which was the recognised haunt of the *jeunesse dorée* of the period, and one much affected by actors, jockeys, sporting journalists, and subalterns, etc.

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There, one evening in April 1889, he was introduced by a fellow member, Lord Albert Osborne, to Miss Belle Bilton, who was then appearing at the Empire. The two had supper together and apparently discovered that they had much in common. The acquaintance progressed rapidly; and within a couple of months of their first meeting Lord Dunlo asked Belle Bilton to marry him. Although he had nothing to offer except his name, for he was dependent on a small allowance from his father—scarcely enough to keep him in cigarettes and cab fares—his proposal was accepted.

Some odd tales of this tempestuous wooing were served up in the American journals; and a typical anecdote, contributed to one of them by a member of the Empire ballet, was the following:

“One evening, after we had finished our performance, Miss Bilton and I were having some refreshment together. Suddenly an English lord, dressed like a jockey, entered the room and said to us, in an offhand fashion, ‘Come along, girls, and have a drink with me.’ I was so annoyed at his common behaviour that I would have nothing to do with him.”

Despite all that was afterwards alleged to the contrary, Lord Dunlo was from the first fully aware of the past history of Belle Bilton. The essence of frankness, she had told him about Alden Weston and she had told him about her friendship with Isidor Wertheimer. In fact, as he himself admitted, she kept back nothing. But it did not affect his resolve. He was more determined than ever to make her his wife.

Well assured that his father would not give his consent to such a marriage, Lord Dunlo impressed upon his *fiancée* that the wedding must be “secret.” As no objection was advanced by her, it took place, on 10th July, 1889, at the registrar’s office in Hampstead. There were only two witnesses to the ceremony. One was the bride’s sister, Florence, and the other was a Mr. Minshull Ford. But it was an odd union, for no sooner was the certificate signed than the couple separated, the husband

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going off to an hotel, and the wife returning to the St. John's Wood house where she had been living with her sister during Isidor Wertheimer's absence in America.

3

Whatever the young couple had wished, it was, of course, impossible that the marriage of an heir to the peerage to an "artiste" of the bride's position in the theatrical world could be kept secret for long. The news leaked out almost at once; and within a couple of days an enterprising journalist had a paragraph on the subject. The Earl of Clancarty read it at the Carlton Club and issued a furious and indignant denial. Thereupon he was promptly confronted with a copy of the registrar's certificate, which was published in the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

Nor were the editorial comments that followed of a description to soothe his feelings:

"This sprig of the Irish aristocracy, though he will not attain his majority until December, has been for some time past an ardent supporter of the many night clubs which have sprung up recently. The Gardenia, the Corinthian, and Evans's all know him well; and it is in these festive haunts that he has captured the heart of the happy lady. His lordship is a tall, slim young man, with his hair parted in the middle, a slightly prominent nose and a beardless face."

An evening journal, not to be outdone in candour (or perhaps wishing to eclipse its morning contemporary), added particulars of the Weston and Wertheimer episodes; and even went the length of declaring, without a shadow of justification, that "Miss Belle Bilton has three children."

Having thus been "given away," Lord Dunlo probably felt that he might as well admit what was now common knowledge. Accordingly he summoned up his courage and wrote to his father:

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“Bristol Hotel,
“Burlington Gardens.

“My dear Papa:

“When I returned from Ranelagh this morning Mamma showed me the *Pall Mall Gazette*, with the account of my marriage. I laughed at it, and came away, because there was no use in saying anything to her. But I must tell you the truth. I believe I really am married, and there is no use denying it. Why I did it I don’t know. I have no excuse to make. I can’t say I was drunk. I don’t think I was; still, I believe I must have been rather off my head during the last few months.

“ . . . I know, of course, that I have played the devil, and am truly sorry for it (I mean for you, Mamma, and Kathleen, etc.); as for myself, I don’t care a rap. No one is to blame except myself. What is to be done now I don’t know. I think that the sooner I go away the better. I should like to remain abroad as long as possible. What is to become of her I must leave to you.

“ . . . I have now made a clean breast of it, and feel much happier. I would have told you some days ago, only I could never summon up pluck enough to do so. I do not expect any forgiveness from you . . . One thing I should like to say, and it is true. No blame can be attached to the girl. All is my fault. Please understand this. One thing I am certain of. The *Pall Mall* had no business to publish the news without my permission. Write, please, and tell me you forgive me.

“Your affectionate son, Dunlo.”

Lord Clancarty was not in the least placated by this. He sent for his son and let loose on him the vials of his wrath. What he said, did not, of course, become public. Still, he must have exerted considerable pressure, for the next thing that happened was that the young husband calmly announced that he had “made a mistake”

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and would leave his newly-married wife. He also undertook to go abroad at once and to stop away from England as long as his father wished.

Lord Dunlo's next action was to take his wife from the St. John's Wood house where she was living to an hotel in Northumberland Avenue. Early on the morning of the fifth day he left her there; and, accompanied by a Mr. Robinson (engaged by his parents as bear-leader and tutor, "to keep him out of mischief"), started on a voyage round the world.

"Nobility stoops." Sometimes it "stoops" very low indeed. Whichever way it is read—and making all possible allowances for an angry and disappointed father (who believed that his son had been "trapped" into a disastrous marriage) and for a weak-willed and irresolute young man—this chapter in the family history of the House of Clancarty is an ugly one. The only person to emerge from it with any measure of credit was Lady Dunlo herself.

4

The cards were against Lady Dunlo. At this crisis of her life, when she wanted all the help she could get, Alden Weston, newly released from prison, forced himself upon her and began a fresh persecution.

The date of Weston's return to freedom was August 1889. He went at once to the music-hall where Lady Dunlo was singing and had an interview with her. Prison had not taught him manners, but it seems to have taught him something of the gentle art of blackmailing. As a preliminary he got into touch with Mr. Wertheimer's valet. Very soon afterwards this individual disappeared, as also did his master's cheque book. Weston then visited a man called Henry Richardson, who combined pawn-broking with bill-discounting. Mr. Richardson had an accommodating nature (especially when it could be indulged in at a profit to himself), and cashed several cheques for Weston that purported to have been drawn



Bassano Ltd.

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by Mr. Wertheimer in favour of Lady Dunlo. Among them was one for three hundred pounds. This, however, instead of being cleared, was returned by the bank, marked "signature differs."

Banks, it appears, have their little prejudices; and, spelling not being Weston's strong point, this one gave as their reason for not cashing this particular cheque the fact that it was signed "Isidore," instead of the more customary "Isidor." Mr. Richardson, considering the objection trivial, applied to Mr. Wertheimer to repay him the three hundred pounds (less discount) which he had advanced on it. When Mr. Wertheimer refused, on the grounds that he had never drawn any such cheque, the holder took proceedings against him for its recovery.

Getting wind of the threatened action (and, doubtless, fearing that the signatures on various other cheques he had got Richardson to cash for him would also be repudiated), Weston wrote a frantic letter to Lady Dunlo:

"My dear Belle:

"I beg of you in mercy to see me for a few minutes alone. I swear that it is only on a matter of the greatest importance. For the love of God, don't say No. I shall not recall the past in word, look or deed. My life is at stake, and I hope your own good nature will protect one who still begs to subscribe himself yours very respectfully.

P.S. I shall not compromise you in any way."

As Lady Dunlo had already suffered too much at the writer's hands she did not grant his request.

The action for the recovery of the amount advanced on the dishonoured cheque ended in the plaintiff being non-suited. Thereupon the judge ordered the papers to be handed to the public prosecutor. As a result Alden Weston, "described as a gentleman" on the warrant, and as "an ex-convict" by the police, was arrested and charged with forgery. At the preliminary hearing Mr.

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Wertheimer said that he had never drawn a three hundred pound cheque, and Lady Dunlo said that she had neither received this cheque from him nor handed it to Weston. She had, however, to admit that she had received various sums of money from Mr. Wertheimer before her marriage; and an attempt was made to discredit her because of the unhappy relationship that had once existed between the prisoner and herself. Still, this did not avail Weston anything; and when he was committed for trial he was convicted and sentenced to seven years' penal servitude.

Naturally enough, the case attracted a good deal of unwelcome publicity for Lady Dunlo. There might, however, have been still more, had not one of the reports sent out by a news agency described the prisoner as "Alderman Weston" and Lady Dunlo as "Lady Dunlop."

5

The Right Hon. the Earl of Clancarty (who was also Marquis of Heusden, Viscount Clancarty, Viscount Dunlo, Baron Kilconel, and Baron Trench) had a very definite opinion on the subject of the eligibility of actresses as wives for heirs to the peerage. The opinion was a very unflattering one. While it included all actresses, whatever the precise niche they occupied as such, it was held with special vehemence where his own daughter-in-law was concerned. So pronounced indeed was his feeling, that he made it his business to take up every incident in her past history that could be used against her; and he even consulted his solicitors to see if the marriage could be declared invalid, on the grounds that his son was a minor when the registry-office ceremony was performed. Of course he failed, for the union was just as valid as if it had been solemnised in Westminster Abbey and by a Bishop.

Gifted with brains and courage, as well as beauty, Lady Dunlo resolved to make the best of a bad job.

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It was a very bad one, for in addition to being deserted by her husband, the man of all others from whom she had a right to expect support, she was without any means beyond what she could earn. At the moment this was nothing. Accordingly she left the luxurious hotel in which she was temporarily installed and took modest lodgings. But she was not allowed to stop in them, for the Earl of Clancarty carried his vindictiveness to the point of having her "shadowed," obviously desirous of discovering something to her detriment. He did not succeed in this, but he did succeed in driving her from the house, for the other lodgers complained of being questioned by the private detectives and solicitors' clerks he employed as emissaries.

In this juncture Lady Dunlo went to see Isidor Wertheimer, who had just come back from America. They talked things over; and to escape the continual persecution to which she was being subjected she returned to his house. It was not a discreet action. But she was a woman in trouble, and a woman in trouble is seldom discreet. Still, she went to St. John's Wood openly, and had her married sister to live with her there. During this period she did not drop Isidor Wertheimer's acquaintance. He had proved himself a staunch friend, and common gratitude, if nothing else, demanded some return. Yet she was always careful to avoid dining or supping in his company except in a public restaurant. But this was not her only precaution, for she wrote to her husband, telling him quite frankly what the position was. In fact, nothing could have been more above board—or less discreet.

Since her husband, with whom she in the meantime kept up an affectionate correspondence, was not contributing anything to her support, Lady Dunlo found herself compelled to return to the stage. This step attracted much comment. It was good copy for the journalists.

"Viscount Dunlo," remarked a gossipy paragraphist, "has gone to the Antipodes, and the Viscountess, we

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are glad to inform our readers, will continue to appear at the Empire Theatre. The recent marriage of Miss Belle Bilton to the heir of the Earl of Clancarty may perhaps cause her to be regarded with curiosity by the public, but her popularity on the music-hall stage was secured long before she gave her hand to a lord."

During all this time Lord Clancarty was straining every nerve to get his son's marriage annulled. Discovering from his solicitors that it was not invalid, he suggested that Lord Dunlo should apply for a divorce, on the grounds of his wife's misconduct, and had a petition, accompanied by what purported to be evidence, sent out to him for his signature. Since he signed it and also swore an affidavit to the effect that he believed his wife to have been guilty of misconduct with Isidor Wertheimer during his absence, it would certainly appear that Lord Dunlo accepted the allegations as well established. Yet the very next day he wrote her the following letter:

"Warrigal Club,
"Sydney.

"December 18th, 1889

"My own darling Wife:

"I last wrote to you from Melbourne, and told you I was about to begin my journey homewards . . . So you think that I forget you? Belle, I do nothing but think of you all day and dream of you all night. I love you. I love you truly.

"Do you remember in a letter you wrote me, dated November 1st (I think), you said that George Lewis had hinted that he was going to write out to me about you? Well he did. I got his letter the other day in Melbourne. I will give you his exact words. They were:

" 'Acting under instructions from your father, I have caused Lady Dunlo to be watched. From the reports of the detectives submitted to me, I have no doubt of the guilt of your wife, who has been daily and hourly in the company of Mr. Isidor Wertheimer.' He then went on to say that, if an action for divorce

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were taken, a decree was certain to be given in my favour.

“Now, Belle, I don’t believe a word of it. But don’t be angry with me. I must say I think you have been about too much with Mr. W. You know how people talk whenever they get a chance, and, of course, seeing you with W., they have begun to jabber. Belle, I love you dearly, but for goodness’ sake don’t give every idiot in town a chance to waggle his tongue.

“George Lewis is not, I think, a man who would go and write to me like that for nothing. You see, his letter is a pretty strong one. But, my darling, I love you with my whole soul, and don’t believe a word of it. Remember, Belle, that I always, always and for ever, love you, my darling.”

It seems incredible that any man (still outside an asylum) could have written such a letter as this to any woman (and that woman his recently-made wife) the day after he had signed a petition to be divorced from her. Yet it was the letter that Lord Dunlo wrote to Lady Dunlo. Of course, he had an “explanation.” This was that “he did not think the petition would be used.” It scarcely sounds convincing.

Lord Dunlo had talked of returning in December 1889, that is, after an absence of six months. But his Odyssey continued. From Australia he went to Japan, and from Japan to India. He seemed to be fond of writing letters. His views in them changed as often as his address. Thus, in March 1890 he wrote to Augustus Moore, the editor of a paper called *The Hawk*:

“Royal Yacht Club,
“Bombay.

“My dear Moore,

“You will see by the above address I have left Australia, and am now in India . . . I hope that in my travels during the past nine months I have picked

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up at least a trifle more sense than when I was in London. The case, I believe, will come on in July next. The whole affair has, I assure you, been a profitable lesson to me, and I hope will be so to any other fools who may be knocking about town next season."

Lord Dunlo certainly had a warm champion in *The Hawk*, for an editorial paragraph in its columns declared him to be "a nice, well-bred and well-educated boy," and added that he had "acted as a gentleman should, with great consideration and almost with chivalry." Still, Lady Dunlo was not without her sympathisers; and it is said that a sum of five thousand pounds was raised among the members of "the Profession" as a subscription towards her legal expenses.

6

It was not until the summer was well advanced that Lord Dunlo got back to England from his prolonged travels. Interviews with his solicitors followed; and after many delays things were put in trim, and the hearing of the action, Dunlo v. Dunlo and Wertheimer, commenced on July 23rd, 1890, before Sir James Hannon and a special jury. The leading counsel were Sir Charles Russell and Frederick Inderwick for the petitioner, Frank Lockwood for the respondent, and Charles Gill for the co-respondent.

In view of the position of the parties concerned, and the nature of the "disclosures" that were expected, the court was thronged by an eager crowd. Yet there were plenty of other matters to interest a sensation-loving public just then. Thus, Stanley had returned from Africa; Heligoland was being ceded to Germany; a battalion of Guards had mutinied at Wellington Barracks, and, after a furious "dressing-down" from the Duke of Cambridge, were being hurried off to Bermuda; the police were on strike at Bow Street, and the postmen somewhere else; a dramatist was quarrelling with Mrs.

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Langtry; the clergy were quarrelling with the bishops; and there was a "little war" in progress with the Dervishes. Still, for all this, the "Dunlo drama" held pride of place as an "attraction."

The circumstance was responsible for an odd comment in one of the society papers:

"Judging from the scene presented in the public galleries during the hearing of this *cause célèbre*, it appears to us, that however much it might have damaged the Clancarty pedigree, the alliance under discussion would certainly have improved the breed."

As Lord Dunlo himself was described as "a weak-faced young aristocrat, a beardless boy with reddish hair and a head that runs back to an angle," this view was possibly well founded.

The line adopted by Sir Charles Russell in his preliminary address was that the Earl of Clancerty had been actuated throughout by none but correct paternal feelings. To this end, said counsel, he arranged that his son should leave England immediately after his "unfortunate marriage." During his absence he had Lady Dunlo watched; and, "having heard a good deal of her antecedents, came to the conclusion that she was not leading a virtuous life. Thereupon he suggested that his son should petition for a divorce, citing Isidor Wertheimer as co-respondent."

To build up his case it was perhaps inevitable that Sir Charles should direct a fierce light on the past history of Lady Dunlo. He spared her nothing. The wretched business with Alden Weston was dragged out in full; and much, too, was made of the fact that she had gone to Paris with Isidor Wertheimer and had also lived in his house in St. John's Wood. That they had occupied separate rooms there did not, in the considered opinion of Sir Charles (voicing the stricter standards of forty years ago) "justify such familiarity." Lady Dunlo was on the stage; and he seemed to think that this would

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account for anything. "The career of an actress," he said solemnly, "is not calculated to result among its followers in that pure simplicity of conduct which is always desirable."

As was to be expected, this pronouncement was not unchallenged; and a paper which posed as the watchdog of the theatre promptly took up the cudgels. "Sir Charles Russell," said a furious leader-writer, "may be an excellent authority on the tricks of his own calling, but he indulged in some very unkind remarks concerning the profession, and very unnecessarily exaggerated its temptations." Angry actors followed this up with "Letters to the Editor;" and, altogether, feeling ran high.

Despite the fact that he was petitioning to have his marriage dissolved, Lord Dunlo let it be seen very clearly that he was not bringing the action of his own free will, and that his heart was not at all in the case. Efforts that were made by his counsel to get damaging admissions from him failed signally. He knew, he said, of the Weston episode, and that his wife had given birth to a child before she met him; and he also knew of her friendship with Isidor Wertheimer. In fact he seemed to be familiar with everything—except a reason for appearing as petitioner.

When Mr. Lockwood took him in hand and cross-examined him on behalf of Lady Dunlo he cut rather a sorry figure. He had promised, it appeared, to take his wife abroad with him when he left England; yet he had gone without her, and had never contributed to her support; he had signed the petition prepared by his father's solicitors; he had made an affidavit that he believed his wife to have been guilty of misconduct with Isidor Wertheimer during his absence; and he had written to her the next day, saying that he did not believe in the charge.

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As in all actions for divorce, letters played a big part in this one. Correspondence was read between Lord Dunlo and his father, and between Lord Dunlo and his wife. There was a pitiful one from Lady Dunlo, signing herself "Your broken-hearted Belle," sent to her husband on the day he left England. This he had answered in affectionate terms:

"At Sea.

"My own, own darling Wife:

"I shall post this at Gibraltar . . . My darling, I will ever be true to you. I shall return to you in December, and then we shall always be together. I shall always be very unhappy until I return . . . Isidor must be a curious man. I shall be interested in meeting him."

"Did the various letters you wrote to your wife represent your true feelings towards her?" enquired Mr. Lockwood.

"They did."

Pressed still further, Lord Dunlo declared that "he considered his conduct honourable under the circumstances." He admitted, however, that he had not enquired as to Mr. Wertheimer's position in regard to the establishment in St. John's Wood, and that he himself had used that gentleman's horses and carriages and servants.

With his exalted notions of his own importance, the Earl of Clancarty, who followed his son in the witness-box, must have found his handling by the respondent's counsel something of a trial. Thus, he had to acknowledge that he had sent Lord Dunlo abroad immediately after his marriage, and that it was he who had employed private detectives to watch Lady Dunlo and had instructed solicitors to bring the present proceedings.

"Did you care," he was asked, "whether Lady Dunlo went wrong or not during her husband's absence?"

"I did not consider the question one way or the other," was the lofty response.

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“But did you care?”

“Not very much.”

“Did you think that if she were parted from him she would be guilty of conduct that would enable your son to get a divorce?” persisted counsel.

“I thought it exceedingly probable.”

“And when did you first form that idea?”

“It was a matter of such complete indifference to me that I really cannot say.”

At this exhibition of what the reporters called “aristocratic callousness,” even the judge, accustomed as he was to plain speaking in the witness-box, looked astonished. However, he put it down on his notes without comment.

When the citation was served upon her, Lady Dunlo, it appeared, had written to Lord Clancarty, asking for an interview with him, in order that she might answer the charges.

“Did you give her an interview or any opportunity of vindicating her character?” was a question put him on this subject.

“I did not.”

The other witnesses called by the petitioner’s side were of the usual description in such cases, viz., discharged servants with a grievance, private detectives, solicitors’ clerks, touts, and irresponsible gossipers. One of the former was a “gentleman of colour,” who had at one period been employed in the co-respondent’s house. Having lost his situation (owing to an unfortunate misunderstanding as to what belonged to Mr. Wertheimer and what belonged to himself), he had, he said, “gone on the stage.”

“I think you now sell programmes in the hall where a nigger minstrel troupe called the Bohee Brothers are appearing,” suggested Sir Charles Russell.

“No, sah,” was Sambo’s indignant response. “I am de corner-man.”

All that this witness could say to Mr. Inderwick, who attempted to soothe his ruffled feelings, was that,

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prior to her marriage, the respondent had lived in the St. John's Wood house as Mrs. Weston and afterwards as Lady Dunlo. Her married sister, Mrs. Roberts, he added, had shared the house with her, and Mr. Wertheimer used to have supper there occasionally. The inevitable private detective, who was then examined, said that immediately after her marriage he was employed by Lord Clancarty to "watch" Lady Dunlo. His report was that she had frequently been in the company of Mr. Wertheimer, and that they had often lunched and supped together at the Café Royal and the Savoy. This, he considered, "daring."

The next witness for the petitioner was a theatrical agent, Alexander Lumsden. As he had not been subpoenaed, he was naturally asked why he was putting himself forward. His answer was that "he had strolled into the law courts as a member of the public to have a drink with a barmaid he knew in the refreshment-room, and had then discovered that the case was on." It did not seem a very good reason for hearing him. Still, he was allowed to enter the box, where he said that he had seen Mr. Wertheimer kiss Lady Dunlo at Manchester. But his evidence was somewhat discounted when he admitted that "he felt justified in speaking against Lady Dunlo because she had not settled his hotel bill and commission for getting her a pantomime engagement."

Another witness who did not help the petitioner materially was a cabman, who said that he had often driven Lady Dunlo, when she was Miss Bilton, and that he had once seen Mr. Wertheimer "put his arm round her."

"What did you think of that?" enquired Mr. Inderwick, looking shocked.

"I thought I'd have done the same myself if I had had the chance."

This admission "excited loud laughter." It also excited the president.

"Such conduct," he declared sternly, "is disgraceful. No member of the public is to be admitted to-morrow to the body of the court without my leave."

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But it so happened that at another stage of the proceedings Sir James Hannon himself was responsible for "laughter in court." This occurred when, on somebody referring to the Royal Holborn as a place where Lady Dunlo had appeared, he blandly enquired, "is that an hotel?"

The last witness on whom Sir Charles Russell depended was perhaps his worst choice. This was a certain Mr. Marmaduke Wood, described by a reporter as "an exquisitely-apparelled young gentleman, wearing a frock coat and a very high collar." He declared that Lady Dunlo had said to him that "she was devoted to Wertheimer," and that she had "begged him to use his influence to stop her husband bringing an action for divorce." Counsel for Lady Dunlo pressed him severely on this point and demanded her exact words. "But all Mr. Lockwood's searching questions were in vain. Mr. Marmaduke Wood stroked his smooth chin and stared at the spectators in the gallery. Remembrance, however, would not come." It further transpired that while in a club he had made a particularly scandalous remark about Lord Dunlo, Lord Albert Osborne, and himself in connection with Lady Dunlo's conduct before her marriage. He now, however, denied having made it.

"Is it possible," demanded Mr. Gill severely, "that you have forgotten that you said it?"

"Well, yes, that is possible."

"Then it is possible that you have told a lie. What do you call yourself? A gentleman?"

"Certainly. I am an officer in the Militia."

"And what other occupation have you?"

"None."

Despite the fact that he was his own witness, Sir Charles Russell thought very little of Mr. Wood, referring to him as "one of those unhealthy fungi which spring up round music-halls." He also came in for a very severe handling from the other side. "The unhappy appearance of this specimen of the modern masher," said an evening journal, "when subjected to Mr. Lock-

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wood's questions, was pitiable to observe. All the starch seemed to go out of his tall collar, and it was with a sigh of relief that he left the court."

Counsel for the petitioner having had their turn, Counsel for the respondent had their innings.

8

Lady Dunlo, in bonnet and bustle (these odd items of feminine apparel were then worn), created a very good impression by her candour and evident resolve to tell nothing but the truth at all costs. She stood up to the batteries of Sir Charles Russell, who subjected her to a very severe cross-examination. For all his cleverness however, he met his match. The circumstance seemed to annoy him, and he became brusque and hectoring.

"You have seen a good deal of the world," he said roughly. "Perhaps you will tell the court how your position towards Mr. Wertheimer differed from that of being his mistress?"

"I was living under his protection, but I was not living with him. That is the difference."

"Have you ever been Mr. Wertheimer's mistress?" interposed the judge.

"No, I have not."

"Then," continued Sir Charles, with an air of triumph, "if your relations with him were correct, as you tell us they were, why did you continue to see him when you were married?"

"Because my husband said that I was to look after the horses. I could not look after them myself."

"Were your letters to Lord Dunlo candid in their allusions to Mr. Wertheimer?"

"Yes, they were."

"In a letter that you once wrote to Mr. Wertheimer the envelope is addressed 'Lord Isidor Wertheimer.' Why was that?"

"Because somebody told me he was a lord."

The laughter evoked by this naive response caused

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the delivery of the customary pronouncement, "This court is not a theatre!"

The case, which had lasted six days, was rapidly drawing to a close. It now only remained for the jury to hear the final speeches of counsel and the summing-up of the judge. The ball was set rolling by Mr. Gill, who delivered a rasping address on behalf of Isidor Wertheimer, in the course of which he had little difficulty in demolishing the contention that there had been any such misconduct between himself and the respondent as was alleged by the petitioner.

Mr. Lockwood, who followed, was still more emphatic. Lady Dunlo, he said, had been cross-examined by Sir Charles Russell "in a manner which no other counsel would have adopted." Beyond her unfortunate slip with Weston, there was, he declared, nothing to her real discredit. Her husband, "acting as the instrument of his father," had refused to take her with him when he left England. "We have only been married nine days," she had said in a piteous letter to him, "and we have already had to part." Then, in a second letter, after she had discovered that the proceedings for having the marriage dissolved were being launched, she wrote: "I scarcely think it necessary to tell you that there is not the slightest truth in these suggestions. I have a great deal to go through here by myself. Why don't you come back to me and end this painful matter?"

Counsel conceded the point that Lady Dunlo had returned to Wertheimer's house after her marriage. But this, he contended, was due to Lord Clancarty's action in setting detectives to spy on her and compel her to leave her lodgings. Her husband was aware of this, for she had written to him on the subject. Lord Dunlo had signed a petition for divorce. Yet he had written to his wife the very next day, protesting that he did believe in her innocence, and he had now told the court that he still believed in it.



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FIFTH EARL OF CLANCARTY

FIFTH COUNTESS OF CLANCARTY

Sir Charles Russell, relying, as was his custom, on advocacy rather than on facts, made a strong effort to bolster up a thoroughly bad case by delivering a brilliant speech. Still, he admitted quite candidly that "the course adopted by the petitioner and his father was an erroneous one," and that "Lord Dunlo, who was not endowed with any high intellectual attainments, did an improper thing in swearing to the truth of an affidavit that he believed his wife to have been guilty of misconduct with the co-respondent when it was obvious from his letters to her that he did not believe it."

Sir James Hannon in his summing-up pointed out that, while it was brought by Lord Dunlo, the action was really instituted by his father. "The joint conduct of Lord Clancarty and Lord Dunlo," he said, "placed Lady Dunlo in a most precarious position. Yet they had heard Lord Clancarty say that he did not care if she did fall." Lacking any measure of support from her husband or his family, she had naturally turned to friends of her own. Conspicuous among these was Isidor Wertheimer, who had been "extravagantly generous to Lady Dunlo before her marriage, and very generous to her after it."

This is a critical world. There are always people who think that a man cannot befriend a woman except for a wrong motive. Fortunately there are also people who think the contrary. The jury were among the latter. Within fifteen minutes they returned a verdict, declaring that the respondent had not committed the misconduct alleged and that the petitioner's action had accordingly failed.

The decision of the jury was that of the public, for everybody felt that Lady Dunlo had emerged from the ordeal with credit. "Outside the Law Courts," says an eyewitness, "there was a remarkable scene. A crowd of many hundreds had assembled, and all traffic in the

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Strand had to be stopped while Lady Dunlo left the building. When she entered a cab, accompanied by her husband, it was amid loud cheers and shouts of 'Bravo! Well played, Lady Dunlo!' and men and boys clambered on to omnibuses to catch a glimpse of her as she smiled her acknowledgments."

The verdict of the Press was also that of the public, and Lord Clancarty came in for some very sharp criticism. The attitude he had adopted was felt to be a very new and unpleasant rendering of the old doctrine, *noblesse oblige*. This, however, was not astonishing, for from first to last his action had been as ill-advised as it had been unchivalrous. Nor had he gained anything by it. He had failed to have his son's marriage dissolved; and he had made public a mass of wretched details respecting his daughter-in-law that, but for this, would have been given decent sepulture. In fact, all that had happened was that a great deal of soiled linen had been washed in public at the worst laundry in the world; and much of it had been badly mangled.

"Whatever discredit," said the *World*, voicing a very general opinion, "the marriage of Miss Belle Bilton may have brought upon the noble House of Clancarty it is as nothing, or less than nothing, when compared with the discredit which has been brought upon the latter by the efforts of Lord Dunlo and his father to dissolve the marriage. From first to last their joint and several conduct was utterly without palliation, and can only be regarded with disgust and contempt by every man or woman with a spark of generosity in his or her composition."

"It's an ill wind," etc. As a result of the ordeal through which she had passed there was a pleasant reconciliation between Lady Dunlo and her husband; and, followed by a cheering mob, they went off to the Café Royal, with Isidor Wertheimer for a guest. That evening the three of them dined with Augustus Harris, and afterwards looked in at the Pavilion, where Lady Dunlo's sister, Florence Bilton, was appearing. Her song, "He Lost It!" met with rapturous applause.

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Interviewed by the inevitable pressman, Lady Dunlo is declared to have said, "I am very happy. I knew I should win, and my husband is as delighted as I am." Lord Dunlo himself also took the opportunity of saying that "he regretted the affair, but had been simply driven into it."

As her husband was without means, and his father would not help them, Lady Dunlo was compelled to resume her interrupted stage career. After her triumph in the witness-box she was, from a theatrical point of view, a much bigger "draw" as Lady Dunlo than she had been as Belle Bilton. Hence her salary advanced from fifteen pounds a week to what was then considered the colossal one of fifty pounds a week. The first manager to snap her up at this figure was Augustus Harris, under whose direction she appeared in a "classical burlesque" called *Venus*. It did not have the effect of increasing the fire-insurance premiums on the Thames. Still, it served its purpose during a long provincial tour; and when this was finished at Christmas she went to Drury Lane for the pantomime.

The adjustment of the marital differences of Lord and Lady Dunlo did not, as their friends had hoped, have the effect of inducing the Earl of Clancarty to acknowledge his daughter-in-law. She had beaten him; she had proved him in the wrong; and he would neither forgive nor forget. But he could not keep her out of her rightful inheritance very long; and, carrying his vindictiveness with him to the grave, he died within eleven months of the dismissal of the petition for divorce.

When this happened, in the summer of 1891, Lady Dunlo was appearing in a burlesque at Plymouth. Together with her husband, who was now the Earl, she left the atmosphere of the footlights and went to Garbally Court, Ballinasloe, to play a more important part there as Countess of Clancarty. She played it in a fashion that won over her most severe critics, for, with her courage and brains and beauty, she adapted herself to

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her new position in a manner that beat down all opposition. She had tact and she had charm; and what appealed as much as anything else to her Irish neighbours, as well as to her husband's tenants, she had a great love of sport.

The marriage which had started so inauspiciously was destined to develop into a very happy one. As such it continued for seventeen years, and brought the Earl and Countess five children. Then a shadow fell on their union, and Lady Clancarty, at the early age of thirty-seven, was stricken with a malignant disease. The doctors did all that was possible, and much was hoped from an operation which was performed by a distinguished French surgeon in Paris. But Isabel Countess of Clancarty was beyond medical skill; and after a period of long and cruel suffering bravely borne, she died on the last day of December 1906.

The death of the beautiful and accomplished woman who had begun life as Belle Bilton and ended it as the Countess of Clancarty was sincerely mourned by everybody in the district where she had lived. "On the day of the funeral," says a newspaper report, "all business in the little town of Ballinasloe was suspended as a mark of respect to her memory, and every blind was drawn along the line of route. From an early hour the tenantry and neighbours began to assemble before the house; and shared between them the sad task of carrying the coffin on their shoulders a distance of three miles to the family vault at Garbally Church."

From chorus to coronet. A big jump certainly. It is true that several members of the theatrical world have achieved it. Yet none has done so with more real grace and distinction than did this ex-sergeant's daughter. During her brief career there was much to her credit, and, all things considered, very little to her blame; and, if, like the rest of us, she made her early slips, later on she atoned for them in full.

It is not everybody of whom this can be said.

SECOND BARON CONGLETON
Peer and “Plymouth Brother”

SECOND BARON CONGLETON

PEER AND "PLYMOUTH BROTHER"

I

UNTIL the comparatively modern fashion sprang up of selecting them from America, British peers have seldom chosen wives of non-British birth. Still, there have been exceptions. The first of them was Lord Newborough, who in 1786 bestowed his heart and hand and coronet on Signorina Maria Stella Petronilla Chiappini, a *ballerina* of the Opera House at Milan. Twelve years later his example was followed by the third Marquis of Hertford (Thackeray's "Marquis of Steyne"), whose marchioness was Maria Gagnani (the "Mie Mie" of George Selwyn). But there have also been two peeresses with very different blood in their veins. One was the second Baroness Congleton, and the other was the eighth Countess of Stamford.

John Vesey Parnell, afterwards Lord Congleton, was born in 1805. His father, Sir Henry Parnell, a distinguished Cabinet Minister who had been Secretary of War (with strong views on the necessity of cutting down military expenditure, and still stronger ones on the non-necessity of corporal punishment), wished him to join the Army. To this end he was educated in Paris and Edinburgh, where he took honours in mathematics and science.

But the lecture-halls of Edinburgh University were not the only places that held his interest. "He would," says a biographer, "get up early in the morning to study, so as to have his evenings left free for the balls and receptions in which he found pleasure, and for which

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distractions his position in society and agreeable manners made him a welcome guest. Thus, the Devil spread snares for his feet."

The "snares," however, did not lure the young student very far or very long. Suddenly he abandoned them and turned to more serious matters. Coming under the magnetic influence of an Edinburgh clergyman, he devoted himself to Biblical research. The effect of his studies in this direction was to alter his entire outlook, and to convince him that he had a "message" to deliver. Full of enthusiasm, he discussed it with his family. They, however, were anything but sympathetic. At first they regarded his new-found zeal with amused contempt, and then with something akin to annoyance.

"I hope, John," his father is reported to have said to him, "that you will drop all this, and give up your religious ways when you become an officer and join your regiment. This sort of thing won't do in the Army."

He was, however, not put to the test, for, instead of giving up his "religious ways" he gave up the Army; and refused to accept a commission when, the proper strings having been pulled, he was offered one. On the whole this was, perhaps, just as well, for he was not of the stuff that would have developed into a soldier of the approved pattern. Nor would he consider adopting, as an alternative to a military one, either a political or a diplomatic career. This attitude caused something of a breach between himself and his father. Still, it did not affect him financially, since he had inherited twelve hundred pounds a year from a relative.

At the date of this happening John Parnell was only twenty-three, with all his life before him. As the atmosphere of his London home was uncongenial, he left it and made a number of visits to Dublin. One of these, which took place in 1828, brought him into close touch

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there with a new religious movement that had just dawned.

Where religion was concerned it was a period of revivalism, when Edward Irving and the Tractarians were sweeping the kingdom, not only in England and Scotland, but also in Ireland. Among their followers in Dublin were the Rev. John Nelson Darby, at the time a young curate in County Wicklow; Edward Cronin, a medical student from Cork; John Bellett, a barrister; Anthony Groves, an ex-dentist from London, who was studying at Trinity College, preparatory to taking Orders; Francis Newman ("a vegetarian, an anti-vaccinationist, and a strong advocate of woman's suffrage"); and Lady Powerscourt. Disapproving of all the established sects, as not founded on apostolic principles, they devised a fresh one for themselves. This was of a somewhat austere description, as ordained priests with fixed ritual and distinctive dress had no part in it.

The first to adopt a definite step was Anthony Groves. Giving up his original intention of taking Orders, he decided to become a missionary at Baghdad, which place, being weak in geography (but strong in piety), he was under the impression was in Persia. It was while he was arranging to go there that he happened to meet John Parnell, who volunteered to secure a passage to St. Petersburg for him and his companions in a yacht, the *Osprey*, which belonged to a friend of his, Mr. Puget. Since this solved a transport problem, the offer was accepted with gratitude; and in the summer of 1828 they sailed from Gravesend, flying, for some reason that is not very clear, "the flag of the Royal Yacht Squadron." Still, it was not without effect, for it secured them a salute from a Russian man-of-war.

As the *Osprey* was a cockleshell of but forty-five tons burden, and a crew had also to be carried, it was a tight fit to get everybody accommodated on board. Thus, in addition to John Parnell and Mr. Puget, the yacht carried Mr. and Mrs. Groves, and their two ~~small~~ boys, "with a deaf and dumb lad of great talent in special

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charge of them"; a Mr. Bothie, a "young Scotch missionary," and a Miss Taylor, daughter of Colonel Taylor, the British Resident at Baghdad. As if these were not enough, there had been some talk of including a little girl called Mary. At the last moment, however, she was left behind. Perhaps this was as well, since the grounds on which her inclusion had been suggested were no more substantial than the following:

"From a very early age Little Mary exhibited strong evidence of the grace of God working in her heart. One night, when left alone with her mother and the young relative brought up with them, she became very angry about some trifle. Thereupon her cousin said, 'Mary, what would your dear mamma say?' Mary looked thoughtful, and, turning to her companion, said, 'Excuse me, Miss, the real question is what would Jesus say?'. . . . On another occasion she said to her mamma, 'I wish you would cut the frills off my trousers. Do please cut them off, dear mamma, because I love them so much that I cannot help thinking of them.' This showed how early she gained acquaintance with the vanity of the human mind."

For a child of only five Little Mary seems, one way and another, to have been singularly precocious.

The "deaf and dumb lad of great talent" who accompanied the missionary party was one John Kitto. He certainly had "great talent," for, as Dr. Kitto, he afterwards developed into a distinguished scholar and Orientalist. Although he was deaf (the result of falling from a roof) he was not entirely dumb. Still, he suffered from a marked impediment of speech.

Born in 1804, John Kitto was the son of a Cornish working-man, "given to profligacy and strong drink." With this drawback to contend against, it is not surprising that he was, when still a mere boy, compelled to seek the shelter of the Plymouth workhouse. It appears to have been a somewhat oddly conducted institution, for he remarks in his *Journal* that "on one occasion the parish constables collected into it all the

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unfortunate women of the town. After prayers had been offered some of the best gentlemen in the district addressed the new arrivals in such a fashion that many of them wept, as well as five-sixths of all the people in the room. Even I," he adds, "almost wept from sympathy."

The Plymouth Mr. Bumble did not allow mere deafness to prevent John Kitto being useful. A niche for everybody. Thus, it is recorded of him that "Sometimes when bad boys were being birched, he was selected to hold their legs, since, being unable to hear their cries, he was not tempted to slacken his grasp." In addition to "thus assisting the beadle, when administering the discipline of the establishment," young Kitto was employed to make and repair slippers for the inmates. The reward of his industry in these two activities was a penny a week, which sum, being an avid reader, he laid out on books instead of on lollipops. This put him into the good graces of the guardians.

As soon as he was old enough to leave the workhouse John Kitto was apprenticed by "the parish" to a cobbler at Exeter. During this period he got into touch with Mr. Groves (at that time still practising as a dentist), who took such an interest in him that he had him taught printing. Being fond of books, this employment proved congenial. It also had the effect of "filling his young mind with religious aspirations." These blossomed so well that the Church Missionary Society sent him, together with a "converted Polish Jew," to Malta, to take charge of a printing-press there. But he did not stop long, for he quarrelled with the committee and was dismissed. On returning to England he rejoined Mr. Groves; and, at his request, accompanied him on the eventful journey to Baghdad in the capacity of tutor for his children.

Owing to rough weather being encountered during the passage of the North Sea it was necessary to put into harbour at Copenhagen for repairs. As soon as these were effected the yacht went on to St. Petersburg and landed the missionary group. There they met a Russian

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officer, one General Papoff, "a simple, affectionate Christian, who also made some sweet remarks on the sovereignty of the Spirit's workings." The subsequent remarks of the Customs' officials about the travellers' baggage were, however, of a less acceptable nature. "They gave us," complained Mr. Groves, "much trouble to no purpose." Also they impounded a carriage belonging to the missionaries and refused to release it until the British Ambassador threatened reprisals.

Having bidden them good-bye, Mr. Parnell left his friends to proceed overland to Baghdad and returned to Dublin. As soon as he was settled there he, together with Edward Cronin and others of his religious views, hired premises in Aungier Street, where the Plymouth Brethren, as they had come to be known, could assemble. The young community, although experiencing much opposition from longer-established bodies, grew rapidly in numbers, "attracting men of moral weight and intellectual power, such as barristers, solicitors, doctors, clergymen, and naval and military officers." Most of the opposition came from the clergy. This, however, was not unnatural, for "the Brethren" held that "all churches were either corrupt in practice or partial and exclusive"; and also that ordination was wrong. Another article of faith among the band was that they should adopt a sort of Pentecostal communism; and one of their members, Sir Alexander Campbell, even went so far as to insist that his servants should have their meals with himself and his wife.

3

Letters which he received from Anthony Groves in Baghdad turned John Parnell's thoughts to missionary work abroad. With him to think was to act; and, having considered the subject in all its bearings, he suggested to Edward Cronin and several others that they should join their friends in Mesopotamia. The idea appealing to them as an outlet for their activities, a group was assem-



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bled from among the Dublin “Brethren.” This consisted, in addition to John Parnell himself, of Edward Cronin and his mother and sister, together with Francis Newman (brother of Cardinal Newman) and a Mr. Hamilton. The inclusion of Miss Cronin had a special interest for their leader, as he was at the time engaged to her, and they proposed to be married at a French port.

During the second week of September 1830 the little band sailed from Dublin. The voyage was not without its trials. These began just as they were embarking, when it was discovered that, although a printing-press, together with a stock of prayer-books and tracts, had been shipped, a medicine-chest had been left on the quay. At Bordeaux, too, the Customs officers raised objections to the tracts, which they declared to be contraband. By dint, however, of a mixture of cash and argument, or “a special petition,” as their owners preferred to call it, “they were accepted as travellers’ baggage.”

Mr. Parnell and his *fiancée* had intended to be married at Bordeaux. This, however, was not so simple a step as they had imagined, because French red-tape (with the workings of which they had neglected to familiarise themselves) required that they should first live in the country for some months. As such a course was inconvenient, they decided to postpone their wedding until they got to Aleppo, a vilayet in Syria, near the Euphrates. Accordingly they rejoined the others and travelled with them via the Languedoc Canal to Béziers.

Although the engaged couple made light of it, the journey could not have been a very comfortable one. “I have,” wrote Francis Newman, “an inward conviction that we are too penurious. Yet I scarcely dare whisper this, lest our noble-hearted, energetic Parnell think it a suggestion of the Devil. . . . The canal boat had a more select, and also a more promiscuous, cabin, the latter, of course, cheaper. ‘God forbid,’ said our generous P. ‘that I should spend the Lord’s money in self-indulgence,’ so into the cheaper cabin he went. So went I, too, willingly. But I was not at all pleased when Mrs.

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Cronin and Miss Cronin resolutely followed. One soon saw what it meant. In that cabin were crowded all sorts of people and all sorts of smells, of which garlic and tobacco were the least unwholesome. Imagine two English ladies and a tender infant stuffed all night into such an atmosphere—such noise, such smoke, etc."

From Béziers the intrepid travellers proceeded by diligence to Marseilles. There they took passage in the *Bonne Sophie*, a French vessel bound for Cyprus, at which place they were to be transhipped to a Turkish boat. "When you quit the *Bonne Sophie*," said the mate, with a Gallic shrug of his shoulders, "all your troubles will begin." His prophecy was correct, and the voyage under the Turkish flag from Famagusta onwards to Latakia, the nearest port to Aleppo, proved an unpleasant experience. That they should ever have reached their destination at all is astonishing, since, in addition to encountering rough weather, "the captain had only one old map, the names on which he could not read, and thus had to steer by eyesight." Still, they did eventually drop anchor; and at Aleppo John Parnell and Nancy Cronin were married by the British Consul in the spring of 1831.

The ultimate objective of the missionary group was Baghdad. As, however, the Sultan and the rival Pashas of the different provinces happened to be at war with one another just then (and it was impracticable to cross the desert, since all the camels and horses had been commandeered), they thought it best to stop in Aleppo until things had "quietened down." At the suggestion of their companions, accordingly, Mr. and Mrs. Parnell seized the opportunity that thus offered itself, and went off to Latakia, in Syria, for a brief honeymoon.

On rejoining their friends they found trouble brewing. This was caused by the fact that one of the members of the group, Mr. Hamilton, had turned out to be an unfortunate selection. He had his gifts, but they were not of the kind that help missionary endeavour. "He is dejected and dyspeptic," was the considered opinion of

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his comrades, "and he will never really aid us in our work. . . His incapacity to learn a foreign language undermined his spirits, and his presence among us was a lamentable 'infliction'." Even John Parnell had to admit that he found him "unsuited," and persuaded him to go back to England. But before he could leave the country he fell ill at Beyrouth, and Mr. and Mrs. Parnell went there to nurse him. Although Mr. Hamilton recovered, the journey across the desert claimed a victim; and within a few months of her wedding the young bride herself succumbed to an attack of fever.

"We have received the afflicting intelligence of the death of Mrs. Parnell at Latakia," wrote Francis Newman." She had been somewhat shaken by a fall from her ass (a very nice animal) . . . The brother and mother here are so deeply affected that I ask, 'What does the noble-hearted husband suffer, but so lately a bridegroom?' I am astounded at the reverse. Two months back she was hanging over my pillow, weeping and kissing me as a dying man; now here I am in youthful vigour and she is in the grave. . . . No blame against Mr. Parnell ought to be mixed with sympathy for this melancholy event. Her brother, on medical grounds, saw no objection to the journey."

4

Having buried his wife, the bereaved husband returned to his companions at Aleppo. On account of the disturbed condition of the country and the prevalence of plague, they could not start for Baghdad until several months had elapsed. As it was, the expedition across the desert to Mosul, on the banks of the Tigris, was full of perils from wandering Arabs, while the Moslem governors of the towns at which they halted were anything but favourably disposed to their evangelistic zeal. They appeared to think it out of place.

With his customary generosity John Parnell had provided horses and mules and baggage animals. One of

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the horses becoming injured soon after they started, the three men had to share the two that were left. This delayed their progress, since they then had to ride and walk alternately. But worse followed, for, on reaching the town of Aintab, the governor, learning that they had distributed some tracts among the populace, peremptorily ordered them to leave their camp within an hour. As they set out they were attacked by a furious mob, who, at the instigation of the priests, began to stone them. Edward Cronin was knocked off his horse, and, together with his mother and her little grand-daughter, would have been killed, had not John Parnell run back and rescued them. "As, perhaps, was to be expected," is the comment of a chronicler, "this untoward happening was taken advantage of by the muleteers to demand an increase of the payment for which they had contracted. By dint, however, of argument and concession matters were adjusted."

Mosul saw the end of their desert wanderings, and they performed the final stage of the journey floating down the Tigris on rafts. It was not, however, until the 27th of June, 1832, two years since they had sailed from Ireland, that John Parnell and his friends reached Baghdad. When they did so "it was to enter a house of mourning," for the city had been swept with cholera and famine; and Anthony Groves had lost his wife and child.

As a preliminary, the new arrivals had to get accustomed to their surroundings. "The first few months were given up to rest and refreshment; and the quiet graciously vouchsafed after the troubles and sorrows they had undergone enabled Mr. Parnell and his friends to develop their plans. The work at first contemplated was among the Armenians and Roman Catholics, as also among the Jews, since they were easier of access than the Mohammedans" Such leisure as they had in the midst of these activities was given up to studying Turkish and Arabic. This was a direction in which John Parnell soon outshone his comrades.

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“Having spoken French from early boyhood and lived in Paris,” remarked one of them, “he has a quicker insight into officials, and understands what they mean when it is not distinctly or fully said. His mind is more European than that of any of us; and, as his mouth is most flexible, he will probably become the most accomplished Asiatic amongst us.”

Premises being wanted for a mission-station, John Parnell, whose purse was ever at the disposal of his less well-endowed comrades, bought a house in the city, where they could all live together. The house was necessarily a large one, since, in addition to himself, it had to accommodate Anthony Groves and his two little boys, Edward Cronin and his mother and child, together with Dr. Kitto and Francis Newman and their servants. Fortunately they were all united in a common bond.

The newcomers were made very welcome, as, from illness and other causes, the strength of the original Baghdad party had become much depleted. There was no lack of employment for them; and, in addition to studying Turkish and Arabic, they had to minister to the bodily, as well as to the spiritual, wants of the native population. So far as the former requirements were concerned, Edward Cronin, having a smattering of medical knowledge, was by common consent appointed to deal with all outbreaks of illness. Unfortunately his knowledge was limited, and he only believed in two remedies for any specific disease. One was to employ the lancet and the other was to give a large dose of calomel. “Much as I esteem our dear comrade’s talent,” wrote Francis Newman (after experiencing his alleged “cure” for a bout of fever), “I am ungrateful enough to think that I should have recovered sooner if he had left me alone.”

If wide in extent, the Mesopotamia vineyard was, notwithstanding the previous tilling of Mr. Groves and his companions, also unfertile. John Parnell, however, threw himself into it with characteristic vigour, and was unsparing in his efforts to spread the tenets of the “Plymouth

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“Brethrenism” among the Armenians and Mohammedans by whom they were surrounded. But much difficulty in getting into touch with them was experienced; and “all efforts,” wrote one of the group, “whether by feeding the poor or by healing the sick, seemed utterly powerless to remove the barrier that Mohammedanism raised all round to check the acceptance of the Gospel.” Not only was there “chilling opposition” from the Bishop of Babylon (who, oddly enough, also happened to be the French Consul-General at Baghdad), but “active opposition” was advanced by some of the governors of the different provinces; and the native *wartabets* (priests) regarded with strong disapproval the attempts of the “infidels” (or *giaours*, as the Turks dubbed the missionaries) to upset the long-established doctrines of Islam.

“Who are these people that have come among us?” they enquired. “Are they so much wiser than our fathers, that we should at their bidding reject what our ancestors have taught us?”

This was an awkward problem. Still, it was, and is, one to which missionaries all the world over have to become accustomed.

Some of them have not solved it even yet.

The opposition continued and became increasingly difficult to combat. “The Prince of Shiraz,” complained Mr. Groves, “is a very wicked man, and Europeans get more insulted there than anywhere else in Persia.” Still, some of the Pashas were inclined to be friendly, and gave orders that “the Franks” were not to be molested.

“All religions are good,” they said, adopting a philosophic view. “It is only the forms that differ.”

But if the little band of exiles had their occasional successes, they more often had their setbacks; and promising converts, about whom they wrote enthusiastic reports to the “Brethren” in far-away England, would suddenly develop traces of the Old Adam. What, however, was still more disappointing was that even mem-

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bers of the European community would sometimes repudiate the Cross for the Crescent.

“We have just heard,” wrote Mr. Groves, “that a German watchmaker in this place has become a Mohammedan. This wretched man already had a wife and children in Germany. Yet he wished to marry a Roman Catholic Armenian here. Fully aware that the Bishop would not allow it, he went to the chief officer of the Pasha and promised, if he would get him this woman, to turn Mohammedan. He has now done so, and he is using all his endeavours to compel the young woman to follow his example. This, at present, she resists; but she has little principle, as she knew beforehand of his being married.”

Altogether, the missionary party seemed to make more headway among some of their own compatriots, one of whom was (until his “conversion”) described as “a gay, thoughtless young officer, travelling back to India.” They also managed to set up a school, with an Armenian teacher, for the benefit of the native children in Baghdad. As the curriculum included English, a nucleus of fifty boys and girls was promptly assembled. Before long, however, trouble developed; and the assistant from whom the staff were learning Arabic was threatened by the Pasha with expulsion, on the grounds that, by associating with them, he “ceased to be a good Mussulman.” As the intimation was accompanied by a hint of unpleasant reprisals, he resigned his post.

5

The Baghdad climate was a trying one for Europeans; and shortly after joining her son there Mrs. Cronin (who was an old lady of sixty, and a grandmother) succumbed to an attack of fever. There was then no woman among the occupants of the mission-house. This was found to be a serious drawback to its continued usefulness, since etiquette and immemorial custom prevented the women-folk of the native converts having further intercourse

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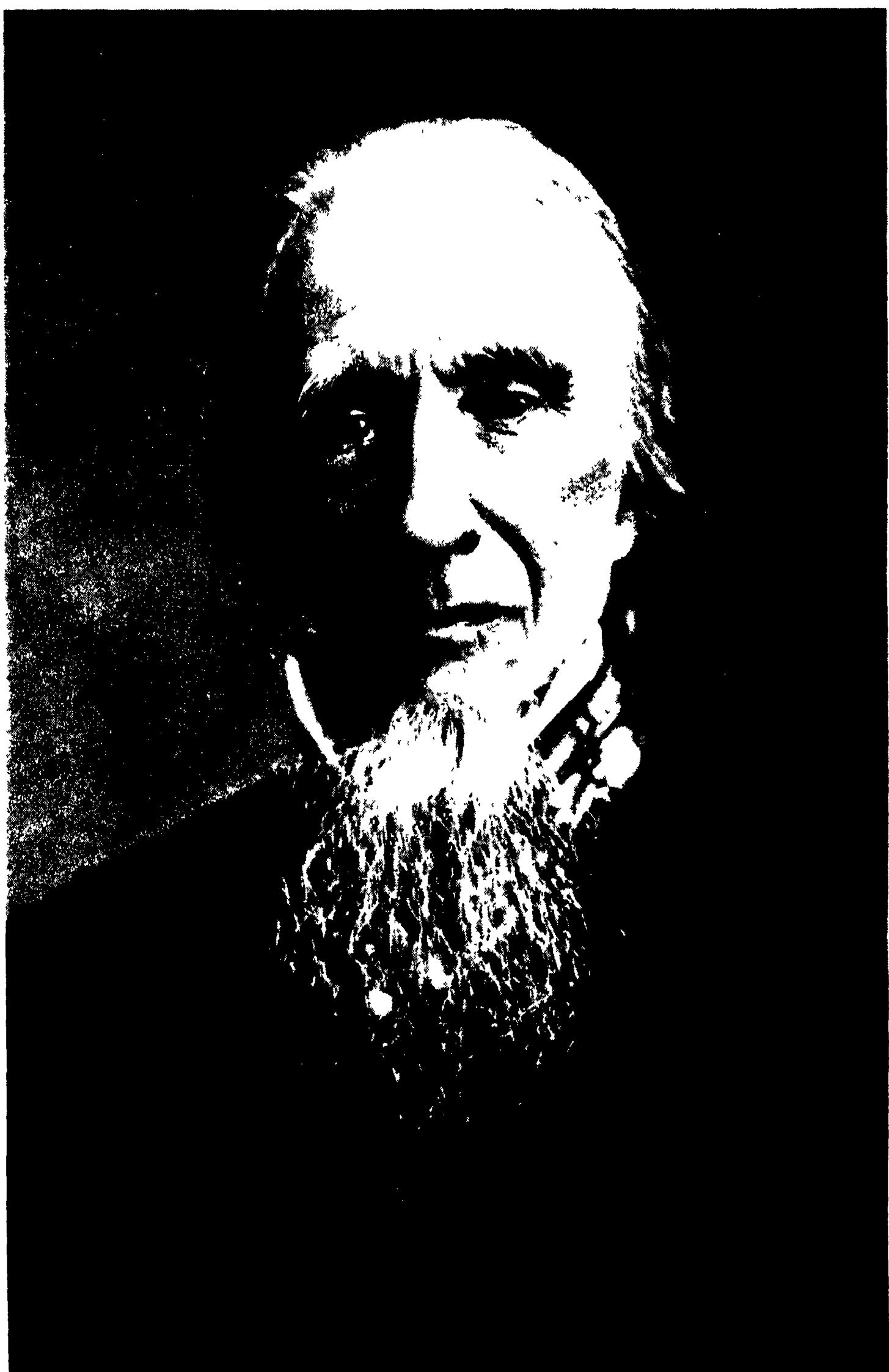
with the male workers there. "Mr. Parnell," we are told, "felt this want to a special degree, and much prayer for guidance on the subject was offered up by him."

It seems that "guidance" was duly vouchsafed, for in 1833 John Parnell solved the difficulty that had arisen by the simple process of marrying a feminine member of his flock. This was an Armenian lady, one Khatoon, the widow of a certain Yoosoof Constantine, a merchant of Bushire, and the daughter of a native of Shiraz.

All sorts of romantic accounts have been given of the circumstances under which this marriage took place. The commonest is that the widow, being cast adrift by her relatives for embracing Christianity, fled to the mission-house, accompanied by her two small children, a boy and a girl, and, declaring that her life would be forfeit if she went back, demanded shelter. Thereupon, and to extricate her from what threatened to develop into an embarrassing situation, the occupants decided that one of them must marry her. A volunteer being called for, John Parnell offered himself; and, his proposal being accepted, the difficulty that had arisen was automatically removed.

"It may be as well," says the author of a memoir, "to contradict a widely-circulated report that lots were cast by the three widowers then in the mission to decide who should become the husband of Mrs. Constantine. To show that this is unwarranted it is sufficient to point out that one of the three had already written offering marriage to a lady in England. In all probability those who originated this story scarcely intended more than to observe that the matter had been committed to God by all three friends, as in itself desirable, and that Mr. Parnell determined to make the offer. Few dream of making family life subject to the higher call of God's service, and therefore many may find it difficult to understand the spirit in which this marriage was entered upon."

Whatever the reason inspiring it, the union turned out



FRANCIS NEWMAN

Elliott and Fry Ltd.

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a very happy one, and was based on mutual affection. At first, however, there was a linguistic obstacle to be overcome, for at the time of their wedding John Parnell knew very little Armenian and Mrs. Constantine knew very little English. Still, she soon acquired a good knowledge of it; and, since she also spoke Arabic and Turkish, was able to be of great assistance to her husband in his evangelistic activities, especially among the women and children.

Notwithstanding all their efforts to make headway in Baghdad, the work of the missionaries proved, on the whole, a failure. To their profound disappointment, neither the Arabs, Armenians, Jews, Persians nor Turks exhibited any real desire to accept the Plymouth Brethren brand of Christianity which Mr. Parnell and his colleagues endeavoured to implant in them. Accordingly, when it became clear that valuable time, which might be better employed elsewhere, was being wasted, it was resolved to give up the Baghdad mission. Thereupon its members scattered. Francis Newman, together with Dr. Kitto, returned to England and accepted a professorship at University College; and John Parnell and his wife, learning from a Captain Cotton, of the Madras Engineers, who happened to visit them, that India offered a more open door for their religious enthusiasms, left for Bombay in the autumn of 1834. They were, however, preceded by Anthony Groves and Edward Cronin, "who had gone on ahead to discover if this new field of labour would justify them in quitting Persia." They were of opinion that it did.

After a trying journey by caravan and steamer Mr. and Mrs. Parnell, with the latter's two children, reached India. From Bombay they went to Calicut, where Edward Cronin had established himself. At first they were given a warm welcome by the civil and military bigwigs, and

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invited to address meetings and expound their religious views in public. But this did not last, for unexpected difficulties suddenly arose. These were brought to a head by the action of a garrison chaplain, who (perhaps scenting "competition") advanced the opinion that the newcomers were impinging upon his particular province. Not content with this, he complained to the higher authorities that their prayer-meetings were "subversive of discipline." This, however, was not all, for "they were spoken against in private and preached against from the pulpit. Some mocked and some were angry; the welcome of the few became the animosity of the many; and this ripened and spread throughout Mr. Parnell's sojourn in India."

Nor, it appeared, was the attitude of "John Company" a sympathetic one. "The heathen Rajah of Travancore," declared Mr. Groves, "has freed all Christians from the duty of attending at heathen processions, but the English Government requires its public officials to attend and to bow to the idol, etc. Are not these crying abominations? When I consider that professing Christians (and some who are, I trust, real ones) have the appointing of the band and the dancing women of the pagodas, and the provision of cars for the idol, I cannot but exclaim, 'Will not the Lord visit such iniquities as these?'"

"Our dear friend had much to try his faith and patience," declared a fellow-labourer. "I once heard him remark, 'If we do get a step here and a step there, it is not long before we get covered with reproaches'."

But if he had his detractors there, John Parnell was not without his admirers in India. "A dear native catechist, as black as jet," sent him a subscription of ten rupees; and he also had a certain amount of active support from "God-fearing" officers of the Company's troops. Prominent among these were Brigadier Dobbs, Colonel Stafford, and Captain Nolan, who was afterwards killed at Balaklava. In addition to this trio there was "a young artillery lieutenant," of whom he said, "I think he will quit that wretched profession of learning

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to destroy his species and enter on the ministration of the Word of Life."

Perhaps the strongest opposition was encountered in Madras, where a serious dispute arose with the head of the Church Missionary Society. This became so pronounced that in 1837 John Parnell thought it best, in the interests of peace, to return home with his wife and her two children. He also, it is recorded, took with him "a valuable young Christian named Sarkis Davids, a convert from the Armenian Church in Baghdad." This youth, it is interesting to note, subsequently went to Glasgow, and there qualified as a doctor.

7

As soon as he got back to England Mr. Parnell settled in Teignmouth, where he took a house for himself and his wife and stepchildren. House rent in that district was then cheap, as the cost of this one was only twelve pounds a year. All luxury being against his principles, he lived there in the simplest possible fashion. "Our dear friend's establishment," said a visitor, "was certainly somewhat primitive. The house had no carpets; and it was furnished with wooden chairs, a plain deal table (which, as a concession to the housemaid, was afterwards stained because of the trouble to keep it clean), steel forks and pewter spoons, and all else to match."

Carpets would appear to be innocent enough. Yet they were always looked upon as "snares" by the stricter members of the community. One of them even carried his objection to such a length that "when his mother, fearing for his health, put a strip of carpet in his bedroom, he cut it up into blankets which he gave to the poor. 'What,' he said, when she remonstrated with him, 'has a Christian to do with the comforts of a world that is everywhere living in wickedness?'"

On his return to them, John Parnell found that during his long absence in the East the Plymouth Brethren had

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developed into a considerable force. The original little handful of followers he had met seven years earlier in a back room in Dublin was now a small army, with strong branches in London, Bristol, and Plymouth. The "Saints" (as the members were known among themselves) were also represented at Teignmouth, Torquay, and Newton Abbot; and he delivered many addresses to these bodies. He had, however, no delusions about his gifts as a speaker. "I once," he told a gathering, "preached in a room which the Brother before me had half emptied. When my turn came I quite emptied it."

Nor had he any diffidence in furthering the cause of "Brethrenism," wherever he might happen to be. "One day," says a story that is told of him, "when crossing from Plymouth to Southampton, he met a Christian coachman among the passengers on the steamer. Shaking him warmly by the hand, he said, 'We must show our colours.' He then took out a Bible from his pocket and read a chapter to the coachman."

In his earnest devotion to the cause he had at heart John Parnell divested himself of nearly all his property. He wanted nothing for himself, but the needs of his wife and stepchildren had to be met. Accordingly he endeavoured to find some secular employment. While thus engaged, however, he was, in the spring of 1842, summoned to London by the serious illness of his father, who, in recognition of his political services, had been created a peer, and was now Baron Congleton.

Answering the summons, John Parnell left his wife in Devonshire and went to live with his father in Cadogan Place. The doctors there gave a very bad account of him. They also said that, as he had developed melancholia, it would be necessary to watch him night and day. Thanks, however, to his son's nursing, Lord Congleton began to show such marked improvement that the watchfulness was gradually relaxed and finally withdrawn. But it had been withdrawn too soon. One morning, on going to call him to breakfast, the valet found him hanging from a hook in his bedroom.

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At the inquest which followed the new Lord Congleton, as John Parnell had now become, was required to give evidence. As "a matter of religious principle," however, he refused to be sworn. Thereupon a point was stretched and "he was allowed to make a statement on his honour." What it amounted to was that he had heard his father threaten to destroy himself. "His mental activity," he said, "had left him since the beginning of his illness."

"Why do you think that?" enquired the coroner.

"Because he no longer found amusement in reading the *Edinburgh Review*," was the answer.

Considering this to be clear proof of the possession of a disordered mind, "the highly respectable jury" delivered their verdict. This was that "Henry Brooke Parnell, Baron Congleton, had hung and strangled himself by means of a certain 'kerchief fastened round his neck and attached to a certain bedpost, he being then temporarily deranged."

"That," explained the coroner, for the benefit of a reporter who looked a little puzzled, "means that he was mad."

Long accounts of the tragedy of Lord Congleton's death, which had occurred within eleven months of his becoming a peer, filled the columns of the Press. Most of them stated the facts correctly. The writer of the obituary notice in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, however, made a slip, since he declared that the new Lord Congleton was unmarried. But this seemed to be a somewhat general impression, as Mrs. Parnell had always shared her husband's wish to avoid mixing with any section of society not belonging to "the Brethren." Now, however, that her Armenian nationality and the peculiar circumstances of her marriage at Baghdad were made known, there was much public interest in Lady Congleton. She declined to gratify it. Nor would she be "presented at Court" with the other peeresses.

In the same way, although he was now Lord Congleton, John Parnell would not allow his new position to

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make any difference to him. Where he was concerned, neither title nor money offered the smallest attraction. Had it been possible, he would have divested himself of his peerage. As it was, he would not accept the executorship of his father's will; and, "on the grounds that his religious scruples did not permit him to subscribe to the necessary oaths," he refused to take his seat in the House of Lords. He kept to this decision for several years; and it was not until 1852 that he could be persuaded that his duty as a loyal subject required him to obey a summons from his Sovereign. But, although he sat there occasionally, he spoke very seldom at Westminster. The first time he did so was when he took part in a debate on the infliction of torture by Government officials in Madras. The view he advanced was that this malpractice would not be abolished until the police ceased to be employed to collect the revenue. He also supported his friend Lord Shaftesbury, who had sponsored a Bill to legalise the holding of religious services in theatres on Sundays.

8

Lord Congleton's interests, however, were remote from politics; and, accompanied by his wife and step-daughter, Miriam Constantine, now a girl of thirteen, he left London and settled at Brighton. There he resumed his religious activities with, if possible, increased fervour. The period was a critical one for him, as grave dissensions and schisms on points of doctrine had suddenly broken out in the ranks of the Plymouth Brethren. The "open" branch was at daggers drawn with the "closed" one, which was said to be attempting to introduce "clericalism," and two separate camps were set up in their midst. Lord Congleton, as one of the earliest members of the movement, did all he could by example and influence to keep peace among "the Saints." Yet he had to admit that they were "singularly perverse."

Allying himself with the "open fellowship" division

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as being more in accordance with the object for which the Brethren was founded, Lord Congleton returned to London. There, in 1849, he began his ministry of the Orchard Street Chapel, which was afterwards transferred to Welbeck Street. This, with occasional absences, lasted for thirty-four years. While he was at the head of it he devoted himself unsparingly to its welfare and met without hesitation every call made on him. As to finance, his views were eminently sound; and he took strong exception to the practice common among other branches of running into debt to further some religious or charitable cause and then appealing to the public to clear off the liabilities thus incurred. "It is not honest," was his view. Nor would he permit his rank as a peer to be held out as a "draw," when a special meeting was being held. "Can you not find," he would say, when such requests were put to him, "some Christian brother among your local body to act for you? Search among yourselves for such a one."

In 1853 he lost his step-daughter, Miriam, who had long been delicate. Although she did not share the religious enthusiasm of his wife and himself ("I wish she was more lively in her soul," was his characteristic comment), there was a close bond between them. "Lady Congleton," says a friend, "was inconsolable at the death of her daughter, around whom her fondest affections were enshrined." The funeral took place in Kensal Green Cemetery; and by the wish of the mother (possibly in accordance with the custom of her native country) the body was covered with a shawl and buried in a crimson coffin.

Although her daughter was dead Lady Congleton still had one child living. This was her son, Lazar Constantine, whose father, Yoosoof Constantine, had been her first husband. He had now developed into a young man of six-and-twenty, and was employed as an engineer in Spain, where his mother went to visit him in 1856. It was their last meeting before she died.

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9

Lady Congleton's death, which severed a happy married life that had extended for thirty-two years, was a great blow to her husband. None the less, he did not remain a widower very long, and he married again in 1857. The new Lady Congleton was a Miss Catherine Ormerod, the daughter of a prominent Civil Servant. They had much in common; and elected to "spend their honeymoon visiting assemblies of the Saints in the south of England." This marriage brought them one child, a girl, whom they called Sarah Cecilia.

As he advanced in age Lord Congleton's health, undermined by his long residence in the East and his unsparing exertions on behalf of the "Cause" he had at heart, broke down, and he suffered severely from rheumatic gout. In an effort to find a cure the doctors sent him to a succession of spas and also to the Riviera. Unfortunately these visits did him little real good, and he returned from them a cripple. But, although he could no longer preach, his energies were undiminished; and he found a fresh outlet for them in writing tracts on religious subjects.

During the autumn of 1883 he felt so much better that, yielding to his earnest wishes, the doctors in attendance allowed him to start off on a visit to Ireland, where he had some property. It was an error of judgment, for at Llandudno, where he had arranged to rest, he caught a chill and had to be brought back to London. In his invalid condition the journey proved too much for him; and on his return he had to take to his bed. The doctors did all that was possible. He was, however, a crippled old man of seventy-eight, and pneumonia had developed. "There was no rallying power in his poor suffering body, and it was obvious to all that the end was near." It came very suddenly. One evening in October his mind began to wander, and he whispered to Lady Congleton that he had a "long journey" to make. "I am packed up and ready to start," he said.

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They were the last words he spoke. Early the next morning he died in his sleep.

Two days later the funeral of Lord Congleton took place at Kensal Green Cemetery, where he was laid in a grave beside his Armenian wife and step-daughter. The service was attended by a very large number of Plymouth Brethren from all over the kingdom.

“So marked” says a newspaper account, “was the respect and esteem in which his lordship was held, that upwards of two thousand persons assembled to pay their last sorrowing tribute to his universal charity and unostentatious piety. As only a small proportion of the mourners could be admitted to the chapel, a second service was conducted at the grave.”

During his lifetime people who did not share his religious enthusiasms had often called Lord Congleton a “fanatic.” Perhaps he was one. If so, however, it would be as well if there were more of them.

LADY EDWARD FITZGERALD
A Woman of Sorrows

LADY EDWARD FITZGERALD

A WOMAN OF SORROWS

I

FOR mingled pathos and romance it would be difficult to find anywhere a story to equal that of the woman who has gone down to history as Pamela Fitzgerald. It touches the whole gamut, beginning in obscurity, developing into tragedy, and ending in sadness.

First of all there is the matter of obscurity. "Who was Pamela?" This question was asked for years in Paris and London and Dublin—in fact, wherever she went—but it has never been settled with any exactitude. Numerous theories, too, are woven round her origin. The commonest (and the one to which she herself subscribed) is that she was the daughter of a Frenchman, M. de Brixey, and an Englishwoman, Mary Simms, who occupied a somewhat humble position as a farm drudge in Canada. According to this account de Brixey was the captain of a merchant ship, and it was on an island off the coast of Newfoundland that he first met Mary Simms.

The suggestion that the meeting was followed by wedding-bells is discounted by the fact that no particulars of any marriage of the pair have been preserved. Mary Simms, at any rate, could never exhibit her "lines." The important thing is that a few months later a girl child, to whom was given the name of Nancy, was born to the couple and taken by them to England. As for de Brixey (on whom fatherhood would appear to have sat lightly), he then vanished from the scene, returning, so rumour has it, to another spouse in his own country. Very probably he had forgotten her existence during

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the interval, for sailors are notoriously haphazard in the conduct of their matrimonial affairs.

Mrs. Simms, as the mother (assuming the brevet rank of a married woman) now called herself, settled in Hampshire. It was there, somewhere about the year 1779, that Fate, in the person of Mr. Nathaniel Forth, ex-Secretary to the British Ambassador in Paris, happened to stalk across her path. Chance led his steps to the little Hampshire village where Mrs. Simms had a cottage. He was so struck with the beauty and attractiveness of her child, who was just six, that he felt she was the very one to enable him to discharge a commission with which he had been entrusted by his friend, Madame de Genlis. This was to procure a little English girl to be brought up at the Palais Royal with the children of the Duke and Duchess of Orléans and to share their lives in every respect.

Having a glib tongue, he had no great difficulty in persuading the mother to part with her daughter. The poor woman, deserted and friendless, was existing on a mere pittance, and Mr. Forth sketched the girl's future, amid the fresh surroundings he promised, as a dazzling one. It was a temptation; and Mary Simms yielded to it. Thereupon the emissary had the child (together with a blood mare, which he had also been instructed to secure) taken to France by a trusted valet.

"I am sending you," he wrote to his employer, "the handsomest filly and the prettiest little girl in England." Nothing is known about the acquisition to the Palais Royal stables, but the child, with her blue eyes, wealth of golden hair and charming manners, won all hearts in the Palais Royal salons. She met to the utmost the expectations of Madame de Genlis, who adopted her as a stepdaughter, and, being a great admirer of Richardson's novel, changed her name from Nancy to Pamela.

"She was astonishingly beautiful," wrote Madame de Genlis in after years. "Her most conspicuous traits were candour and sensibility. During the whole course of her education she never uttered a falsehood or embarked

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upon any form of deceit. . . I was passionately devoted to her, a devotion that has, in some respects, had unfortunate results."

According to Madame de Genlis' own account of the transaction, she also induced Mary Simms to renounce all claim upon the child in return for a cash payment of twenty guineas.

"I was very uneasy," she says, in her *Memoirs*, "lest her mother might put in a legal claim to her, or have threatened to do so, in order to get money out of me. I consulted various English lawyers, and they said that I must protect myself by persuading the mother, in return for an agreed sum, to let me have the girl as an apprentice. She was willing to do so, and signed a document before Lord Chief Justice Mansfield. By the terms of this she handed over her child, with a written undertaking not to demand her back until I should have been repaid the cost of her upbringing and education."

This does not ring true. From start to finish the story is full of weak spots. To begin with, the British courts would scarcely have concerned themselves with any such domestic arrangement. Nor would it have come within the province of the Lord Chief Justice. Apart from this consideration, no record of the alleged agreement was ever produced. Certainly the archivists of the King's Bench and the Chancery Division knew nothing of it. But Madame de Genlis, who was by way of being "literary," read novels as well as wrote them. Hence, perhaps, her lively imagination. It is further significant that she had so little knowledge of the real name of the woman whom she always declared to be Pamela's mother that she spelled it in various fashions. Thus, sometimes it was Simms; sometimes Sims; sometimes Symes (with an elusive Captain Symes hovering in the background for a husband); and sometimes Seems. Still, it was never de Genlis.

Yet this just was what the voice of gossip in the salons and clubs and cafés asserted it to be. Madame de Genlis, and not Mary Simms, was, said half Paris, the child's

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mother, and was equally positive that her father was no less an individual than "Egalité," otherwise the Duc d'Orléans himself. The gossip was well founded. Nominally lady-in-waiting to the Duchess, Madame was held to be something a good deal more to the Duke; and although she protested that the idea was an "atrocious calumny," it was common knowledge that a *liaison* had (and still) existed between the pair. Apart, too, from this circumstance, Pamela bore a very marked resemblance to both of them.

Further, Madame de Genlis, during her régime at the Palais Royal, was credited (or, rather, perhaps, discredited) with responsibility for two other illegitimate children. Yet, despite this slip from the narrow path, her complex was so odd that her published works included one entitled, "Religion considered as the only Basis of Happiness," and a second, "Precepts, Maxims and Reflections, Moral, Religious and Sentimental." It would thus appear that the lady agreed with Hamlet's counsel, "Assume a virtue, if you have it not."

2

It was to satisfy the questions of busybodies that Madame de Genlis accounted for the presence of the little English girl at the Palais Royal by telling enquirers that she was there to serve as companion to the Orléans children. The Duke subscribed to this convenient theory, and, although he never acknowledged himself as her father, he made a settlement on her. This, which amounted to fifteen hundred francs (in the days when francs were francs), was afterwards considerably increased. The contract was drawn up in legal form by a notary, with M. Barère as trustee.

Whatever her parentage (which, by the way, is still an unsolved enigma), Pamela developed in grace and attractiveness. "She is a creature to win all hearts," declared somebody who knew her when she was sixteen. "There never was a girl more fascinating. She is



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beautiful, accomplished, and the possessor of a heart which would make her a treasure to any man who might win her."

That man was to come; and sooner than anybody had expected.

But before there was any hint of a husband on her young horizon Pamela was taken by Madame de Genlis on a visit to London, where the Duc d'Orléans offered them the use of his house in Portland Place. During this visit she was launched by her stepmother into "high society." Lord Inchiquin took her to the House of Commons; and among others whom she met were the Prince of Wales, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Charles James Fox, Horace Walpole and the Duchess of Devonshire. Later on, when at Bath for "the waters," she was introduced in the Pump-Room to Southey. The poet was only nineteen; and Pamela's fresh young loveliness made such an impression on him that he could write, after forty years had elapsed: "She was so beautiful that even to-day I believe I can recall her face."

During this second visit to England, which occurred in 1791, things did not go too well with Madame de Genlis. Her ducal "protector" had cut off supplies, and, as a result, the strictest economy had to be observed. Still, she contrived to bring her "stepdaughter" (as she called her) into touch with several people of distinction. "I am painting two portraits of Pamela," wrote Romney to his friend Hayley, "and I think they will both be beautiful. As they are two different views of her face, one of course will be better than the other, and I shall give Madame de Genlis her choice of them."

Sheridan, who had recently become a widower, also fell before the girl's charm. He is said to have proposed to her, when, chaperoned by Madame de Genlis, she was stopping in the villa at Isleworth to which he had fled from his London creditors.

"Did I tell you," wrote Lady Malmesbury to her sister, Lady Elliot, "Sheridan is so much in love with

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Madame de Genlis' Pamela that he means to marry her if she will have him."

There was a half-hearted engagement between the pair, but nothing more. Sheridan, however, was obviously not discomfited, since he afterwards married somebody else. Pamela, too, was at the moment heart-whole.

The special ambition of Madame de Genlis was, during this visit to England, to see Pamela married to an "English Lord." She angled desperately to this end, but none of her efforts were successful. The fact was the part recently played by "Egalité" in the Revolution reacted upon herself. English Society held all *émigrés* to be suspect; and doors that had once been open to them were now fast shut. The result was, Madame de Genlis, calling down anathemas upon *Perfide Albion*, took her ward back to France.

In the meantime, events were marching to their appointed end. All unknown to Pamela, the man with whom her fate was to be linked had arrived in Paris.

That man was Lord Edward Fitzgerald.

3

Born in 1763, Lord Edward Fitzgerald was (if a statement in a biographical volume is to be accepted as correct) one of the nineteen children of the first Duke of Leinster. From this example of aristocratic fecundity it would appear that birth control was not then in general adoption among the upper classes. As a matter of fact, however, the ducal quiverful was much more restricted than this anonymous genealogist declares.

Fighting was in the blood of the Fitzgeralds. To Lord Edward the call of the drum was so insistent that, as a lad of seventeen, he joined the Sussex Militia. The selection of this corps was a wise one, since its commanding-officer was his uncle, the Duke of Richmond. As a not unnatural result, the path was made considerably smoother for him than for the average young ensign, and he was soon found to possess talents that battle-

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scarred veterans themselves often lacked. Still, if he owed something to nepotism, he owed more to his own qualities, for he was never deficient in dash and courage. Thus, anxious to see service, he exchanged into the 19th Foot, and accompanied them to America. There he smelled plenty of powder, and was at Charleston during its investment by Sir Henry Clinton. His gallant conduct under a hot fire attracted the favourable notice of Lord Moira, commanding the British forces in that singularly inglorious campaign, and he was rewarded with a staff appointment.

Being severely wounded during a skirmish, Lord Edward was invalided and sent home to Ireland. There, his elder brother, the Duke of Leinster, had him elected as M.P. for Athy. Instead, however, of wooing politics he wooed, first, Lady Catherine Meade, and then his cousin, Georgina Lennox. On receiving his *congé* in both quarters, he endeavoured to find consolation in returning to a military career. Accordingly he rejoined his regiment in Canada. The sergeant-major there happened to be a man who was himself to become a conspicuous figure in the political arena. This was William Cobbett, who always declared that he was indebted to Lord Edward for assistance in procuring his discharge to civil life. He also described him to Pitt as "a most humane and excellent man, and the only really honest officer I ever knew in the Army."

Lord Edward's second spell of foreign service did not last long. At the end of a couple of years he was back in Ireland, to find that during his absence he had become M.P. for Kildare. The times were stirring, and hopeful for the dawn of a better era. But much of the good work that had been performed by Grattan and Curran was rendered nugatory by the operation of the restricted franchise and the pocket boroughs which strangled all real progress.

It was about this period that Lord Edward visited Paris, full of a burning zeal for the cause of the revolutionists. This cause he embraced with such ardour that

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he attended a public banquet, on the toast-list of which was one advocating (among other alleged *desiderata*) "the abolition of all hereditary titles and feudal distinctions." Practising what he preached, he there and then renounced his own title, and declared that he wished to be known as "The Citizen Edward Fitzgerald."

It was a boyish freak, allied to a theatrical gesture. But it was one for which he was to pay dearly. When the news of this act of self-abnegation reached England the Horse Guards took a serious view of it and promptly cashiered him. Thereupon his friends pulled various strings to get the decision cancelled. Among others to concern themselves with the matter was Fox, who championed his cause with fiery warmth in the House of Commons. "The British Army," he declared, "does not possess a more zealous, meritorious, or promising officer; and he has fought and bled in the service of his country." But it was all to no purpose. The ruling was not rescinded. "Discipline," announced the angry generals, "must be maintained!"

The fact that he no longer held a commission troubled Lord Edward very little. He was still in Paris, and his thoughts just then were occupied with something—or, rather, someone—else, for he had fallen violently in love. The object of his passion was a young girl whom he had encountered by chance at the Feydeau Theatre. What first attracted her to him was a close resemblance that she bore to another woman, the dead wife of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, whom he had once wished to marry.

But if he had admired Elizabeth Linley (not to mention Lady Catherine and his cousin Georgina) it was a fierce consuming flame that he felt for the girl he saw for the first time on a December evening in the *foyer* of a Paris theatre, where he had gone by chance.

"What is her name?" he asked eagerly.

"She is called Pamela," he was told.

With the impetuous ardour of his nationality Lord Edward at once sought out a common friend, Mr. Reid, and got him to effect an introduction. The young Irish-

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man made the most of it, and impressed Madame de Genlis, who was also present, so favourably that she invited him to dine with herself and adopted daughter the next evening.

Lord Edward "came and saw and conquered." He had no eyes for anybody but Pamela. "The brilliancy of her beauty and the free expression of her feelings for liberty made a deep impression on the young Irish lord."

So far as both the young couple were concerned, it appears to have been a genuine case of "love at first sight," even if, on the part of Lord Edward, it was not one of "first love." His wooing was as swift as it was impetuous. Pamela was swept off her feet by its intensity; and within a week from the day they first met the two were betrothed.

As Madame de Genlis and her ward had received peremptory instructions from the National Convention to leave the Republic they resolved to go to Belgium, as affording them sanctuary until things should quieten down again in France. Lord Edward's offer to escort them was accepted with gratitude, and the trio travelled together to Tournai. On arrival there Lord Edward urged that, since nothing was to be gained by delaying matters, the marriage of Pamela and himself should take place before they left the town. Pamela being quite willing and her stepmother advancing no opposition, the ceremony was performed at the Church of St. Quentin.

The date was 27th December, 1792, and one of the witnesses who signed the register was Louis Philippe, afterwards to become King of France.

In those days there was a certain slackness among ecclesiastical officials, and young couples who were in a hurry to get married were not over particular about the entries that appeared in the register and on the certificate. Hence (possibly, of course, because she was still under age) the bride allowed herself to be put down as nineteen, when she was really only sixteen. But there were more serious departures from the truth than

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this, for her father's name was given as William Berkley and her birthplace as London. As for her actual description, she was declared to be "Stephanie Caroline Anne Sims, known under the name of Pamela."

The marriage was duly announced in the Irish papers. But the announcement there took a form differing materially from the one in the Tournai register. Thus, the *Masonic Magazine*, for January 1793, appeared with the following:

"The Hon. Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Knight of the Shire for the County Kildare, to Madame Pamela Capet, daughter of his Royal Highness the *ci-devant* Duke of Orléans."

4

Almost immediately after the wedding the young couple travelled to England, where their arrival was duly paragraphed in the "Fashionable Intelligence" columns of the Press:

"January 3rd, 1793, Lord Edward Fitzgerald arrived with his bride at Dover from France."

The Duchess of Leinster's carriage met the pair and brought them up to her house in London. There Pamela was warmly welcomed by her husband's mother, and also by his stepfather, William Ogilvie, and his sisters, Lady Sophia Lennox and Lady Charlotte Strutt. They were all of them full of her praises. "I never saw such a sweet little engaging creature as Lady Edward," wrote Lady Sarah Napier, discussing her to a friend. Lady Charlotte was still more enthusiastic. "How delighted they will all be in Ireland with Pamela," she said in a letter, "I reckon she will be made a great Fuss of in Dublin, where they have Taste."

There was only a brief honeymoon in London, for Lord Edward was anxious to show Pamela his Irish home. Hurrying off with her to Dublin, where their

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arrival was chronicled in the newspapers as that of "The Rt. Hon. Lord Edward Fitzgerald, his lady and suite," he wrote to the Duchess:

"April, 1793.

"Dearest Mother,—I have been very idle, and so has my dear little wife, but I hope you will forgive us . . . Dublin has been very gay, a great number of balls, of which the lady misses none. Dancing is a great passion with her. I wish you could see her dance. You would delight in it. She dances with all her heart and soul. Everybody seems to like her, and to behave civilly and kindly to her.—Your affectionate son,
"E.F."

In thus asserting his wife's universal popularity Lord Edward was not strictly accurate. As it happened, her questionable origin had been made the subject of malevolent slanders by venomous tongues that wagged in drawing-rooms; and she had also inspired a certain amount of ill-will on the part of more than one young woman in Dublin society who had set her cap at Lord Edward in the days of his bachelorhood.

As showing the lengths to which the slanders could go, an allusion to them by Lady Sophia is informative:

"There are sad, ill-natured stories about Lady Edward in Ireland, which I am sorry to find, as by that I fear she is not very popular. However, as the stories are of a nature too horrid for people really to believe, I look upon it as of no real importance, for no person that has the warm feelings of a Christian can believe for a moment such vile reports, viz., that a Lady had seen her in the streets of Dublin with a Handkerchief on her Neck spotted with Louis the XVI's blood, that some of her Friends had sent her from Paris. I suppose it is some of those amiable Ladies that are envious of Lady Edward's beauty and accomplishments that have invented these shocking reports."

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But although venomous tongues continued to wag, the jealous sneers left Pamela untouched. She had something else just then with which to occupy her thoughts. This was that her marriage would soon be crowned by maternity. In preparation for the event, which was expected for the autumn, she went to stop, first at Frescati, near Blackrock, and afterwards at Kildare Lodge.

“I like Kildare very much,” she wrote to one of her sisters-in-law, Lady Sophia. “We are happy from morning to night. Eddy reads aloud to me, while I work at the baby clothes that you are giving to your little nephew or niece.”

In order to have the services of the best doctors and nurses Pamela was moved to Dublin for her confinement. There the baby, which, to the delight of the pair, proved to be a boy, was born at Leinster House in October 1794. Together with her infant the young mother then returned to the Curragh downs, where she was joined by her husband whenever he could tear himself away from the arena of politics.

Existence in the Kildare home where the two (now three) made their nest was very pleasant. “It is,” wrote Lord Edward, describing the house to his mother, “the smallest thing imaginable . . . In front you come into the parlour, a good room, with a bay-window looking into the garden, which is a small green plot, surrounded by good trees, and in it three of the finest thorns I ever saw; and all the trees so placed that you may shade yourself from the sun all hours of the day; the bay-window covered with honeysuckle, and up to the window some roses.”

An ideal nest for young lovers. Pamela, with her husband and her baby boy, was as happy as the day was long. “Life seems to me,” she wrote to Madame de Genlis, “more like a beautiful dream than reality. We are so happy that sometimes I ask myself, ‘Will it last?’ ”

It did not last. Already a shadow was falling across those halcyon days.

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The shadow was due to the fact that Lord Edward had become enmeshed in the web of politics. Ranging himself on the side of Curran and Grattan, all his sympathies were with the Opposition; and in 1793 he created a "scene" in Parliament by openly declaring: "I do think that the Lord-Lieutenant and the majority of this House are the worst subjects the King has."

This was considered to be going too far—much too far—even for St. Stephen's Green, where rhetorical vehemence was indulged in as a matter of course. The result was he had to appear at the Bar and apologise. The apology he offered was distinctly equivocal, as all that could be extracted from him was, "I said so, 'tis true, and I'm sorry for it." Not unnaturally, the shocked House resolved, "The excuse offered by Lord Edward Fitzgerald for the said words so spoken is unsatisfactory and insufficient."

His next gesture was to join the "United Irishmen," a body whose openly-acknowledged aim was to overthrow British rule in the country and set up a Republic.

After much discussion with the leaders of the "movement" the Executive decided to send Lord Edward and Arthur O'Connor, nephew of Lord Longueville, as delegates to Hamburg. The task entrusted them there was to sound Reinhard, the French Minister, as to the possibility of forming a Franco-Irish Convention. Much was hoped from this move, since Talleyrand was already whipping up sympathisers in America and Wolfe Tone was being employed on a similar errand in Paris.

Lord Edward accepted the trust imposed on him with eagerness. He asked for nothing better. "In America," he said, "I fought against liberty. In Ireland I shall fight for it." As Pamela, who was in his confidence and shared his aspirations, insisted on accompanying O'Connor and himself, she left Ireland in the early summer of 1796. While in London, waiting for a passage across the Channel, she supped at Devonshire House, where she

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happened to meet the Duke of York. H.R.H. having a theory that "pretty women should not be mixed up in politics," and also wishing to do her a good turn, gave her a friendly hint that the conspirators' plans were known to the authorities. But Pamela would not accept the warning. Her place, she protested, was by her husband's side. Accordingly, and although she was in delicate health, she went with him to Hamburg. The journey was too much for her, and a week later she was prematurely confined of her second child, a girl, who, christened Félicité, was always called Pamela.

The Duke of York had been quite right when he said that the object of the Hamburg errand was known to the Cabinet. The Government's secret-service agents kept them well apprised of everything that was happening. Much was happening, but not as Fitzgerald and O'Connor wished or imagined. All unsuspected by themselves, an informer, one Samuel Turner, sent word to London of the scheme that was being hatched for an expedition under General Hoche and Admiral de Galles to land on the coast and "rescue" the Irish. But the Irish did not want to be "rescued" nearly as much as the French thought they did. Also, as had happened at the time of the Armada, the winds and waves entered into an alliance. As a result, the attempt fizzled out like a damp squib; and, instead of clearing for action in Bantry Bay, the fleet scurried ignominiously back to Brest harbour.

The flame of rebellion was stamped out, but not in a manner that reflected any credit on England. Fierce reprisals were exacted. All Ireland, from one end of the country to the other, swarmed with red coats and bristled with bayonets; day by day the gallows creaked; and martial law filled the prisons and hulks to overflowing. "Informers," ready to sell their fellow-countrymen for a few pieces of silver, sprang up everywhere, and "No man, going out in the morning, knew if he would return at night."

Among those to be swept up in the first batch was

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Arthur O'Connor, whose arrest was described by Pamela as "really too shocking." Lady Sarah Napier, however, took a longer view, and was less sympathetic. "I do," she wrote, "most sincerely from my heart condemn O'Connor, who is vain and arrogant enough to think his judgment ought to lead his country into a revolution. . . . His friends say he is an honest man—I own I doubt it."

6

With his fondest plans and hopes thus gone utterly astray, Lord Edward, accompanied by his wife and infant child, returned to Ireland. There, resolving to strike a more serious blow for the object he had at heart, he took the lead in converting the United Irishmen into an armed and disciplined body which should repudiate all allegiance to the Crown. An integral part of the scheme was that it should be backed up by a second French invasion. But once more the help for which they looked across the Channel not materialising, the rebel leaders felt their courage slackening. Lord Edward, however, would not hear of a withdrawal. Instead he demanded the adoption of still more vigorous measures. These, it is said (but without any real proof), included the assassination of a number of Irish peers when they were assembled to conduct the trial of Lord Kingston for murder.

The Government, however, were not to be caught napping. They had a battalion of spies, even in the ranks of the United Irishman themselves. Thomas Reynolds, who was at the head of one body of rebels, swiftly changed over from conspirator to informer. Having no stomach for assassination on the wholesale scale that had been projected, he (together with another agent of Pitt) disclosed full particulars of what was afoot. As a result, on a memorable evening in March 1798 a magistrate's warrant was secured, and a number of ringleaders were arrested at the house of Oliver Bond, treasurer of the "Party" in Dublin. All of them

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were convicted of high treason, and Bond was sentenced to be hanged. He avoided the rope, however, by dying in prison.

More by good luck than by good management Lord Edward escaped being captured with those trapped on this occasion. As a matter of fact he had gathered that Reynolds, despite all his fine promises and expressions of sympathy with "the Cause," was turning his coat. Still, it is possible that he was warned by him. At any rate, he was not in Bond's house when the police entered it. His idea was to slip across to Paris and urge Talleyrand to bring help. But before doing so there were other matters that wanted his attention, and he felt it best to stop where he was until they should be settled.

The decision was a fatal one.

Lord Edward was less of a strategist than a tactician. Although he fancied himself in concealment, the authorities knew very well where to put their hands on him. As it happened, however, they did not wish to be embarrassed with his capture just then, and would have been only too glad if he had taken the opportunity of going off to America, or France, or anywhere else he wanted. "For God's sake," said the Lord Chancellor, (Lord Clare) to one of his relatives, "get him out of the country. No hindrance will be offered."

But Lord Edward was not of the stuff that leads others into danger and then runs away from it. On the message being given him he resolved to stop beside the men who had trusted him. "I am too deeply pledged," he answered, "to be able to withdraw with honour." For this act of chivalry he was to pay dearly, and also to bring to a close the sunshine of his wife's short-lived happiness.

When the Castle officials found that he would not abandon his humbler comrades they, confident that a Judas would be forthcoming to betray him, offered a reward for his capture; and all Dublin was placarded with bills, issued by the lord-lieutenant, promising "one thousand pounds to any person who shall discover, apprehend or commit him to custody."

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The net began to narrow. With a price on his head, the hunted man took refuge in a mean house in a back street of Dublin. Had he observed the most elementary caution there he might yet have escaped. But beyond adopting a childish disguise (a peasant's jacket and a wig that would have deceived nobody) he would not observe caution of any kind. Thus, during the period that the hunt was hottest he visited Pamela, who, sheltering herself in a poor lodging near Merrion Square, had just given birth to a third child; he had interviews with his lieutenants; and, for all the pains he took to keep out of the way, he might just as well have left his address at the Castle. Apart from this, there was treachery in the ranks. Never a cause without a Judas to betray its leader. There was one now. In fact, there were several to quarrel among themselves over the division of the blood-money that the Government had offered. The one who ultimately received it is said to have been a Catholic barrister named Magan. There were, however, in Francis Higgins (proprietor of the *Freeman's Journal*) and John Hughes (a Belfast bookseller) other claimants for the dishonour. On this subject a grim entry in the Civil List for 1798, recording "Account of Secret Service money applied in detecting treasonable conspirators," is significant: "F. H. Discovery of L.E.F., £1,000."

As planned by Lord Edward, the general rising was to have taken place on May 23rd, 1798. Three days earlier, as he was resting on his bed in the house of one Nicholas Murphy, a small tradesman, there was a thunderous knock at the door. Stout-hearted Murphy would have shot the bolt, but before he could touch it the room was swarming with soldiers, headed by a magistrate, with a trio of officers, Major Sirr, Major Swan (the Town-Major of Dublin) and Captain Ryan. As soon as sentries had been mounted to guard the exit, they rushed upstairs and challenged the man for whom they had come.

"You know me, my lord," said Major Swan, shaking

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him by the arm, "and I know you. I have a warrant for your arrest. Consider yourself my prisoner."

Resolved not to be taken alive, Lord Edward, his back to the wall, resisted fiercely. He was not a man of powerful build, but despair lent him strength. Snatching up a dagger, he inflicted a mortal wound on Captain Ryan, who was attempting to seize him. As he lifted his arm for another thrust, Major Sirr levelled a pistol and disabled him with a bullet in the shoulder. It sent him crashing to the floor. "Poor Ryan," he murmured, as he collapsed from loss of blood, "I am sorry."

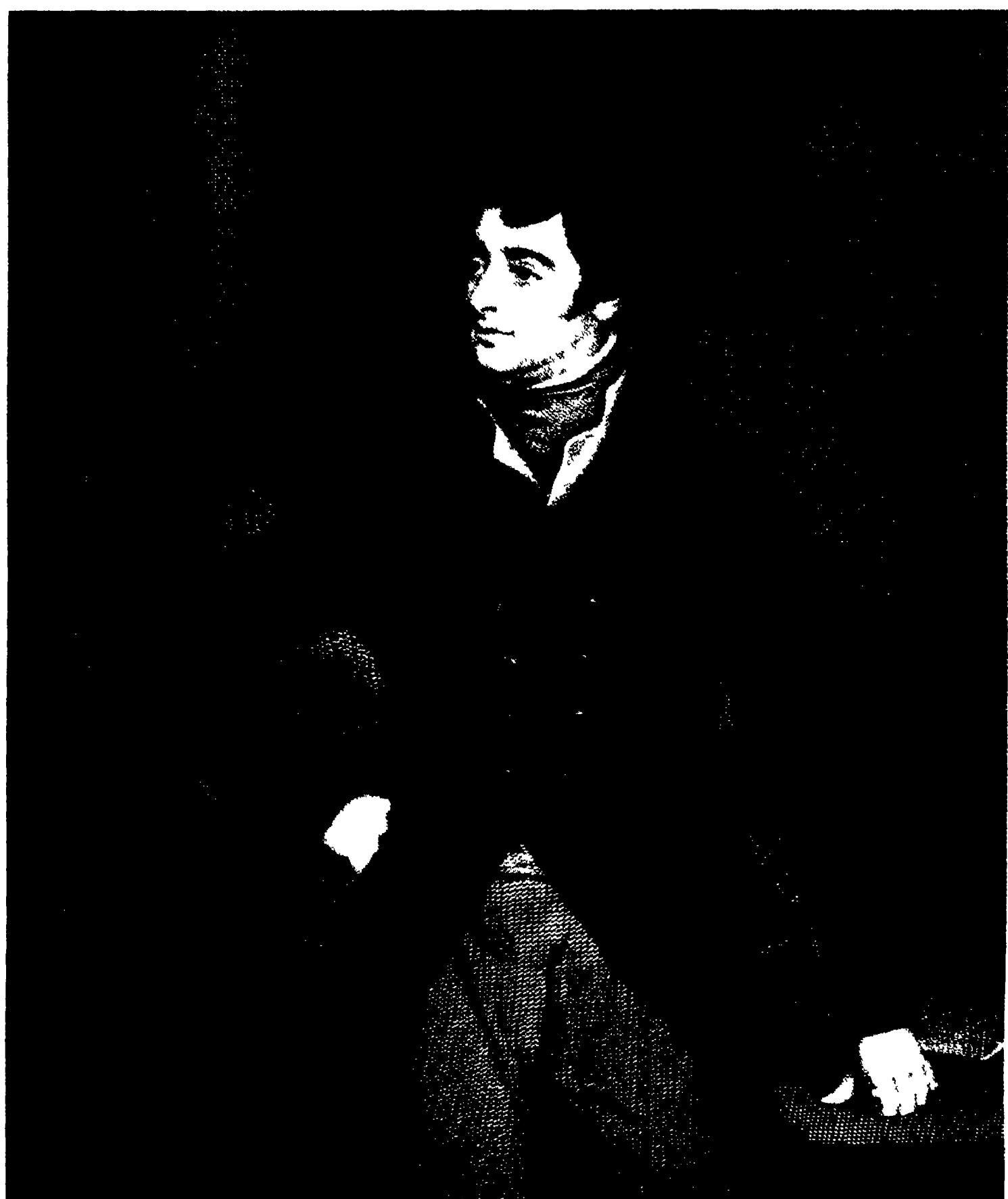
On being bundled into a waiting coach and driven to the Castle under strong escort (for the mob, getting wind of what had happened, attempted to rescue him), he begged to see his wife. Permission was refused, but he was told that any message from him would be delivered.

"Oh, break this to her very tenderly," he said.

When his wound had been dressed he was transferred to a prison cell, to await his trial for high treason. The doctors had pronounced his injury as of "no consequence." They were wrong in their diagnosis. It developed unexpected symptoms. Inflammation set in and spread through his system, weakened by exposure and anxiety. Within a few hours he was delirious.

During his confinement Pamela, almost off her head with the shock of what had happened, made desperate attempts to be allowed to join her husband in his captivity. She knew he was doomed; but she wanted to share his pallet while he yet lived and to hold him in her arms when death should claim him. To this end she forwarded piteous appeals to the authorities; and even parted with all her small possessions, in the hope of bribing the prison officials. "She determined," said Lady Sarah Napier, "to die with him, if condemned for loving him, and for her perfect confidence in his honour, justice and humanity."

But all to no effect. The grim walls of the prison cell inexorably shut her out from where she would be



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in those last sad hours. Even while she stood at the gate waiting for news, the troubled spirit of the man who held her heart left his body.

“Thus died,” wrote Nicholas Murphy, “one of the bravest of men, from a conviction, I believe, that he could ameliorate the condition of his country.”

This was true enough. What, however, was equally true was that his death served no purpose. Generous and impulsive and full of sympathy for the down-trodden, Edward Fitzgerald had the defects of his qualities. All heart, but no head. As an instrument he would have been a success; as a leader he must be written a failure.

7

In the hour that her husband died the sun set on the happiness of Pamela Fitzgerald. Scarcely had his body been coffined when the Government began to talk of arresting her as well; and, with a measure of inhumanity that hardly sounds credible, she was ordered to leave Ireland while he was still a State prisoner.

“It was notified harshly,” says Lady Holland, “intimating that, unless she obeyed speedily, she would be arrested and tried for her life, as the Government would hang her from proofs that they had against her.”

As a matter of fact, the authorities had no “proofs.” Still, her situation was serious, for those were days when a breath of suspicion was followed by a warrant. Accordingly, she was put on a ship and hustled out of the country within an hour of the order being given.

The news of Lord Edward’s death was brought to the widow by the Duke of Richmond, who met her in London. It was a tragic task that confronted him.

“By degrees,” he says, “we broke to her the sad event. Her agonies of grief were very great, and violent hysterics soon came on. When the Duke of Leinster came in she took him for Edward, and you

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may imagine how cruel a scene it was. But by degrees, though very slow ones, she grew more calm. . . It seems a diversion of her own grief to employ her mind in anxiety for that of those she most loves, and who were dearest to her dear husband,”

The Duke's sister, Lady Sarah Napier, wrote to him on the subject:

“Your generous, tender, and noble conduct towards all our afflicted family, but in particular to Lady Edward, has made an impression on my mind of the most consoling nature. . . I know of no human being more formed by your tender, patient perseverance to bring her poor distracted mind to composure; and your talents for cheerfully occupying her thoughts will, I doubt not, chime in with her natural youthful vivacity so well as to give you full powers of consolation over her mind in due time.”

The sympathy of the Duke of Richmond took a practical form; and he offered Pamela shelter at Goodwood House, where she spent the rest of the summer. The Duchess of Leinster, who was also stopping there, was full of her praises: “She is a charming Creature,” she wrote to Lord Henry Fitzgerald, “and the more one is acquainted with her real character the more one esteems and loves it. But, even were she not so, *he* adored her. *He* is gone! This is an indissoluble claim that must ever bind her to our hearts.”

But, notwithstanding all the kindness she experienced from the Richmond and Leinster families, the new-made widow was not happy at Goodwood. Her heart was buried in her husband's grave. Until she could join him there she felt that she must leave England. Since she could not go to Ireland, her idea was to remove to Hamburg, where a girlhood friend, Henriette de Sercey, niece of Madame de Genlis, had married a banker, M. Matthiessen; and a daughter of Madame de Genlis also lived in the district.

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As may be imagined, this prospect of cutting herself adrift from her English relatives did not commend itself to those who had Pamela's best interests at heart. But she had made up her mind to go, and steadily refused to be gainsaid. Hence, in the autumn of that ever-memorable year she left for Hamburg, taking her little girl Pamela with her, but leaving the other two children, Edward and Lucy, with their grandmother.

The decision to live abroad was one of the many errors of judgment to which Pamela Fitzgerald yielded. It was a bad move, with far-reaching repercussions; and it estranged her from her friends in England and plunged her into much unhappiness.

Some of this unhappiness was caused by financial considerations. Pamela Fitzgerald had always been accustomed to the command of money; and now there was none to command. No settlement had been made on her by Lord Edward at the time of their marriage. Just before his death, however, he had drawn up a will, leaving her everything, "as a mark of my esteem, love and confidence." As it happened, however, he had nothing to leave, since, under the harsh law of that period, all his property was held forfeited to the Crown. The fact that he had not actually been convicted of a felony was got over in characteristic fashion by rushing through Parliament a Bill of Attainder. It was a piece of posthumous malignity, opposed to law and opposed to justice, for "No man," says Sir Matthew Hale, "ought to be attainted of treason without being called upon to make his defence and put to answer." But, justice or not, the Crown wanted its pound of flesh, and was determined to have it.

In addition to this, supplies were further cut off owing to Pamela's annuity from the Orléans family having been discontinued. As a result she was, when she arrived in Hamburg, almost penniless. After a time, however, this situation was to a certain extent relieved by the voluntary action of her late husband's relatives, who, between them, subscribed a modest sum for her support. It was

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enough on which to live quietly. Unfortunately, Pamela's ideas of living "quietly" were not practical. She felt that she had a "position" to keep up; and insisted on a good house in a fashionable district; a retinue of servants; and carriages and horses.

For a time she carried on a correspondence with her sisters-in-law, Lady Lucy and Lady Sophia. Gradually, however, this cooled off, and then stopped altogether. She herself was partly responsible, for Hamburg was a whispering-gallery, and stories reached Ireland hinting that the young widow's conduct was not entirely circumspect. Although these stories were unfounded, what was well founded was a rumour that she was contemplating remarriage. Among the English-speaking residents in the town were many applicants for her hand. The one to whom she gave it was the American Consul at Hamburg.

This position was held by Joseph Pitcairn, who had recently been transferred from Paris. Of Scottish descent and Presbyterian upbringing, he stood well with his superiors, having been specially selected for his appointment by Washington himself.

"We have inquired about his character, which is excellent," wrote the Duchess of Leinster to Lady Sophia, "and I therefore hope the dear little soul will find an end to all her troubles and pass her Days in Peace after the storms of her youth."

8

But this hope was unfulfilled; and the marriage, which took place in 1800 (and resulted in another child, a girl who was christened Helen), was not a happy one. This, however, was more or less inevitable, for Pamela and her second husband had temperaments that clashed. Mr. Pitcairn was middle-aged and "serious," whereas Pamela was young and fond of society. There was also a recrudescence of the old-time money difficulty. The Consul, if comfortably off, was far from rich, and his

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wife was undoubtedly extravagant. She could never learn to cut her coat according to her cloth. Her boy, Edward, at home in England, must go to Eton, and afterwards into the 10th Hussars; and her daughter, Pamela, must have the best masters and mistresses. She had nothing of her own with which to indulge these wishes, for the Fitzgeralds, thinking (not unnaturally) that Mr. Pitcairn should now do all that was required, had stopped the two hundred a year they had allowed her during her widowhood. Pamela felt herself aggrieved at the decision, and wrote peevish letters to them: "It is shameful," she said in one, "that since three long years it should be Mr. Pitcairn who maintains Miss Fitzgerald. . . I say that it is much better for Miss Fitzgerald to receive the money from her relatives than from Mr. Pitcairn. I did not have the luck to bring him a half-penny in marriage. Had I a fortune of my own, I would make no demand to Miss Fitzgerald's relations."

Not, to say the least of it, a wise letter. Still, allowances must be made for the circumstances in which it was written.

"Just Heaven, how unhappy I am!" was another cry wrung from her. . . "The older I grow, and the further my past misfortunes are removed, the more I suffer from them. I hope that Death will soon come and put an end to all my heart's suffering."

Kept "short" by her husband, Pamela incurred a considerable indebtedness to the local tradesmen, who tempted her by offering credit for anything she wanted. Womanlike, she wanted many things. The goods were delivered and the bills sent in to Joseph Pitcairn. He paid up, it is true, but he did not look pleasant. Quite the reverse; and there were stormy scenes between the two. To escape her husband's wrath Pamela made a flying visit to London in 1806. There she incurred further debts; and is said to have avoided arrest only by slipping across the Channel with somebody else's passport.

Although she had escaped the attentions of the English bailiffs and emissaries of the sponging-houses

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who had tracked her as far as Dover, Pamela would not return to Hamburg, for the domestic atmosphere was being disturbed just then by something much more serious than money troubles. This was jealousy on the part of Pitcairn. It was caused by the fact that, instead of rejoining him at Hamburg, Pamela went to Vienna. Fond of masculine admiration, she was undoubtedly a little indiscreet; and gossip had it that she travelled there with Prince Esterhazy. Without troubling to discover what measure of truth was in the scandalous tales that filtered back to him from the Austrian capital, Pitcairn, sulking in his consulate, chose to believe the worst.

An explanation would have solved the misunderstanding. But Pamela was too proud to give one. The result was the husband and wife separated; and Pamela, resuming her old name, for the rest of her life elected to be called Lady Edward Fitzgerald. She also returned to Paris with her daughter. While living there she was harassed by the police, and frequently subjected by them to domiciliary visits. As showing the lengths to which they were prepared to go, in 1815 an official report asserted that she "mixed with many persons known for their bad political opinions," and a year later it was solemnly announced, "She has an understanding with the Orleanist party."

There was not a word of truth in these allegations. The very last thing with which Pamela wished to be concerned was politics. They had brought her nothing but wretchedness.

As before, financial stringency continued; and she was compelled to change her lodgings at frequent intervals. The changes were not for the better. When creditors grew pressing she removed to a village called Malabry. There she found shelter in a peasant's cottage, where she had to perform menial tasks to keep body and soul alive. What, however, was a greater anguish than anything was parting with her daughter, Pamela, to whom the Duchess of Leinster had offered a home in England.

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It was a sacrifice, but Pamela Fitzgerald made it, as she had made other sacrifices for those she loved. Then, on being allowed a small income by Joseph Pitcairn, she went, first, to Toulouse, and then, after boarding at a convent, (which, if economical, was uncomfortable) she returned to the capital. There she met her old friend Arthur O'Connor, who had gone from an English prison to the service of Napoleon. With him she had many talks of her beloved Lord Edward and the happy days in Dublin and Kildare before they were to be engulfed in the maelstrom of politics. She also met her son Edward, who, as a dashing young Hussar, fresh from campaigning with Wellington, was spending a furlough in Paris. Later on she had a short visit from both her daughters. It was thirteen years since she had last seen the younger one, Lucy; and Pamela now had a husband of her own, having, while in England, married Sir Guy Campbell.

9

For the remaining few years of her darkened life Pamela Fitzgerald lived in a small hotel in Paris. They were not happy years. There was nothing to make them so. Her youth had gone; her health had gone; and she was poverty-stricken, forlorn and very nearly friendless. Only her courage was as high as ever. But the struggle was unequal; and on a chill November evening in 1831 she turned her face to the wall and drew a last shuddering breath.

“I am very tired,” she whispered.

They were the last words she ever spoke.

Although she had recovered a modest annuity during her last years, Pamela Fitzgerald left so little money that, but for the action of Louis Philippe, she would have been hustled into a pauper’s grave. But the son of *Egalité*, not unmindful of her claims upon him, saw that she should be buried in decent fashion; and out of res-

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pect to her memory Talleyrand followed the coffin to the cemetery at Montmartre.

For just on half a century the remains of Pamela Fitzgerald rested there undisturbed. Then one summer morning in 1880 they were, at the instance of her grandchildren, given fresh sepulture in English soil and reburied at Thames Ditton.

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The “King of the Plungers”

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THE “KING OF THE PLUNGERS”

I

LORD REDESDALE, who was at school with him, has, in his *Memories*, a reference to the fourth Marquis of Hastings:

“The King of the Plungers was Harry Hastings—the last Marquis—who was my fag at Eton. He was an attractive little boy, and I think that everybody liked him; but his ideas, when he grew up, were on too large a scale. He had no health, and by burning the candle at both ends and in the middle sealed his own fate.”

No truer words were ever written of anybody.

Born in 1842, Henry Weysford Charles Plantagenet Mure Rawdon-Hastings succeeded, through the unexpected death of his elder brother, as fourth Marquis when only a boy of nine. Seven years later he inherited the Barony of Grey de Ruthyn; and among his string of a dozen peerages he also held two earldoms and a viscountcy, and thus possessed a coronet in England, Ireland, and Scotland. As an orphan he was under the care of his guardian, Lord Howe. That nobleman took his responsibilities somewhat lightly. Still, he sent him to Eton, and afterwards to Oxford. “But his stay at the latter seat of sound scholarship and religious doctrine was,” says a chronicler, “brought to a premature close.” Not to put too fine a point upon it, trouble with the governing body and a supreme contempt for the University statutes led to this step.

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As heir to vast estates and a five-figured rent-roll, Lord Hastings had from his earliest years lived in an atmosphere of venal incense, of toadyism, and of sycophancy. This was continued at Oxford, where he was exploited by a gang of unscrupulous touts and harpies who battened upon him. They had only to call him a “sportsman” to get anything out of him they wanted. Most of them wanted a good deal. For their benefit he kept open house at Donnington Hall, where every advantage was taken of his good (or, rather, weak) nature.

While still an undergraduate at Christ Church a chance visit to John Day’s training establishment seems to have set his footsteps in the direction they were to follow with such disastrous consequences; and “a liking for the Turf and its pursuits, long dormant in his heart, was thereby awakened.” The “liking” was certainly there, for as a mere schoolboy he had indulged in many a “flutter” during surreptitious trips to Epsom and Ascot; and he figures (as a dissipated youth, leaning against a carriage and talking to a gypsy girl) among the portraits in Frith’s “Derby Day” canvas, which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1858. Since he was then only sixteen, he must have begun early.

But racing was not his only pursuit. He also considered himself a cricketer well above the average, and captained an eleven, of which the other members were the servants and villagers at Castle Donnington. His views, however, inclined towards the bizarre, and he had a habit of sitting down while fielding. When he was batting, too, he sulked if he did not make more runs than anybody else. He generally did so, for the bowlers took care to send him easy lobs; simple catches would be missed deliberately; and the umpire would mechanically give “no ball” if his wicket fell too soon. Thereupon the Marquis, very pleased with his prowess, would distribute sovereigns all round.

Although he can never be said to have come to years of discretion, Lord Hastings did come of age. This was in 1863, when his trustees, probably rather glad to be

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relieved of their stewardship, handed over to him nearly a quarter of a million pounds, representing the accumulations of his long minority. In addition to this capital sum, he had an income of twenty thousand pounds a year. Looking upon money as something of which to get rid, he set himself to spend it. The task was one in which he had no lack of willing helpers.

When he was sent down from Oxford (where he learned nothing except to squander his time and substance, Lord Hastings, developing martial ardour, got himself appointed a cornet in the Leicestershire Yeomanry. Drill and discipline, however, appealed to him so little that he promptly resigned his commission.

If the first Marquis of Hastings wrote his name with imperishable honour in India, this fourth one wrote his in a very different fashion in London. *Noblesse oblige* was there given a new and unsavoury rendering by him. Making Limmer's Hotel, in Bond Street, his headquarters, he passed most of his waking hours in the east-end rookeries and Haymarket nighthouses, with a deliberately selected escort of bookmakers, pugilists, tuft-hunters and *chevaliers d'industrie*. Another of his amusements was cock-fighting, an indulgence which once led to his being prosecuted and mulcted in five pounds by an unsympathetic magistrate.

“In those far-off days,” says the author of a gossiping book of memoirs, descriptive of the London of that period, “Lord Hastings was the chief actor in every devilry. Beloved by police and publican, he occupied a privileged position. Nothing vicious characterised his jokes, and he had but one enemy—himself. His advent at a ratting-match or a badger-drawing was a signal to every loafer that the hour of his thirst was ended and that henceforth ‘the Markis’ was in the chair.”

The assertion, “nothing vicious characterised his jokes” is odd, for some of them were blackguardly in the extreme. Thus, on one occasion he considered it desperately comic to turn out the gas in a Haymarket night-club and then let loose a sackful of rats among the

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women dancers there. Another of his “jest”s—described by a flunkey reporter as “a pardonable ebullition of aristocratic high spirits”—was to dredge a toll-keeper with a bag of flour. This pleasantry, however, was so little appreciated that it cost him ten pounds to avoid being prosecuted.

2

It was not without reason that Lord Hastings was known as the “Plunger Peer.” Gambling was in his blood, for both his parents had been bitten with the vice. He would wager huge sums on anything. When there did not happen to be a race-meeting handy with a horse to back he would challenge all comers at pitch-and-toss, or cutting cards. There was no end to his extravagance. As he truly said of himself, “money positively melts with me.” He had twenty thousand pounds a year, but he lived as if he had a hundred thousand. Although the bookmakers always declared that they lost to him “in the long run,” they managed to get a quarter of a million out of him first. Most of this went into the coffers of such “Leviathans” as Messrs. Steele and Herring. The latter, by the way, had begun his career as a tout for Dr. Palmer, the Rugeley poisoner. He ended it as a philanthropist and art patron.

“The boy is father of the man.” When little more than a schoolboy Lord Hastings blossomed into an owner, and, as “Mr. Weysford,” won a race at Brighton. On his twenty-first birthday he was elected a member of the Jockey Club. His first colours were red, with grey spots. Preferring, however, another prismatic effect, he afterwards changed them, at the suggestion of the Duke of Beaufort, to scarlet and white hoops. In a very short time these were seen at meetings all over the country.

When he made his *début* on the Turf the newcomer had what would nowadays be called a “good Press.” *B's Monthly Magazine* led off with a fulsome panegyric:



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“The young nobleman whose portrait we offer to our readers this month may, without the slightest exaggeration, be described as one of the most distinguished acquisitions to the English Turf. Few, if any, beginners have enjoyed half the good luck which has fallen to the Marquis of Hastings or deserved it more. Open-hearted and confiding, he has placed himself in hands which he feels assured will protect his interests and his property; and whether he wins or loses, he shows neither undue hilarity nor despondency. As a dashing bettor he has had no equal at Newmarket since the famous Colonel Mellish; and those who predict that the form is not a staying one will, we imagine, turn out to be false prophets . . . It is too early to speak of his lordship as a Master of Hounds; but from the spirit with which he has got together a pack, with which he will hunt the Quorn, we have no fear of his management being either unpopular or unsuccessful.”

In Leicestershire, however, Lord Hasting’s assumption of the role of M.F.H. was not regarded with such approval. But there was reason for this, as he was full of idiosyncrasies that interfered with the general comfort of the field. One was a habit he had of fixing a meet for eleven o’clock, and then not arriving with the servants and hounds until two in the afternoon. This characteristic inspired the Muse of an annoyed member (said to be Lord Rosslyn) to parody a popular ballad:

WHO CAN TELL?

“When will the Marquis come? Who can tell?

Half-past twelve, or half-past one? Who can tell?

Is he sober, is he drunk? Nipping like Nymheer von
Dunk?

Will he ride, or will he funk? Who can tell?

Shall we have to wait again? Who can tell?

In the wind and in the rain? Who can tell?

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While the Marquis, snug and warm, in the hall where
toadies swarm,
Leaves us in the pelting storm? Who can tell?"

Not quite the best poetry, perhaps. Still, it hit off the general sentiment. Their subject, however, was not in the least upset by these criticisms. On the contrary, he seemed to take them rather as a compliment than otherwise; and would have all the verses and squibs about himself reprinted and distributed among his acquaintances.

3

In the year 1864 one of the most popular young men in London was Henry Chaplin. Being also the possessor of a handsome income, he was, from a matrimonial point of view, distinctly a parti; and as such was much sought after by match-making mothers. He preferred, however, to choose for himself. His choice, when he exercised it, fell on Lady Florence Paget, daughter of the second Marquis of Anglesey. She was just twenty-two and was considered to be first among the reigning *débutantes*. Many wooers were attracted to her; but they all had to give place to Henry Chaplin, the young Squire of Blankney, for it was his proposal that was accepted. The match appeared an ideal one, inspired by genuine affection on both sides; and after a brief engagement it was announced that the young couple would be married during the summer.

Everything proceeded smoothly; and the prospective bride and bridegroom were the recipients of good wishes from all classes, headed by the Prince and Princess of Wales. The wedding was to mark the wind-up of the "season," and the date was fixed for the last Saturday in July. During the week preceding this the engaged pair, who had been visiting their future home at Blankney, returned to London. Practically all the arrangements had been completed. The bridesmaids had been chosen;

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the guests had received their cards of invitation for the reception; and Lady Florence had actually shown herself in her wedding-attire to her special friends.

It was at this moment that Fate elected to deal Henry Chaplin a staggering and unsuspected blow.

In her interesting volume of reminiscences, *From a Great Grandmother's Arm-Chair*, Henry Chaplin's sister (who afterwards became Countess of Radnor) has the following version of the dramatic happenings of that memorable 16th July, 1864:

“My eldest brother became engaged to be married that summer to Lady Florence Paget—daughter of Lord Anglesey—who (with the exception of her teeth) was the most beautiful woman I ever saw. She was not very dependable, but was most fascinating, and I was very much taken with her.

“At the end of the season I went down to Coleshill until it was time to come up for the wedding, and then—one day to my astonishment—I received a telegram from my brother, saying, ‘Florence ran away with Hastings this morning. Come to me, my sister.’

“. . . Harry felt it most terribly, but never a word would he hear against her. She told a friend shortly before that this, if she married Hastings, *she* would have *her* own way; but that if she married Harry Chaplin, *he* would have *his* way; and that, no doubt, accounted for her strange behaviour.”

Lady Augusta Fane, who knew everybody, also has a reference to the subject in her book, *Chit Chat*:

“Lady Florence Paget was high-spirited, lively and spoilt, and by the time the wedding-day was fixed she had tired of her *fiancé* and had fallen in love with fascinating, hare-brained Harry, Marquis of Hastings, who persuaded her to elope with him.”

There are many conflicting versions of what really happened. Sacrificing accuracy to picturesqueness to a more pronounced extent than usual, one such even

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declares that the couple went to Gretna. The commonest version, however, is that on the day after she arrived in London from Blankney Lady Florence drove to Swan and Edgar's in Piccadilly, with Mr. Chaplin; and, telling him to wait outside, left the shop by another door, where she was joined by the Marquis of Hastings, who married her at a registry-office.

This version is erroneous. The drama was not staged in Piccadilly, and Lady Florence was not accompanied by Mr. Chaplin. Nor was she married at a registry-office. The episode occurred at a draper's shop in Oxford Street, to the back of which Lady Florence drove up alone in her father's carriage. She then walked through the premises to another door, where, acting on a pre-arranged programme, she was met by a certain Frederick Granville, who, being in the conspiracy, led her to a waiting cab. Its other occupant was Lord Hastings; and the next moment they were driving off together to St. George's, Hanover Square, where they were married by special licence.

That evening Henry Chaplin, all unconscious of what had transpired a few hours earlier, received a letter from the woman who had played him false. A pitiful, but pathetic document, full of self-reproaches and attempts to justify the writer's conduct:

“Would to God I had had the moral courage to open my heart to you sooner, but I could not bring myself to do so . . . I know I ought never to have accepted you at all, and I also know I could never have made you happy . . . And now we are eternally separated, for by the time you receive this I shall be the wife of Lord Hastings. I dare not ask your forgiveness. I feel I have injured you far too deeply for that. All I can do now is to implore you to go and forget me. You said one night here, a woman who ran away was not worth thinking or caring about, so I pray that the blow may fall less severely on you than it might have done. May God bless you, and

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may you soon find someone far more worthy of becoming your wife than I should ever have been.

“Yrs., Florence.”

To forget, so far as possible, the humiliation to which he had been subjected (the full story of which is told with sympathy and understanding by his daughter, the Marchioness of Londonderry, in a memoir), Mr. Chaplin left England and spent a year travelling in India. On his return it was inevitable—since “society” was much more restricted then than now—that whenever he was in London he should from time to time encounter Lady Hastings. When he did so he was always friendly and courteous in his bearing towards her. Similarly, he was never known to utter a word against her husband.

4

It is the privilege of women to change their minds. Still, the process should be conducted with some regard for decency. Lady Florence, however, exhibited no such regard, but acted throughout in a fashion that was merely self-willed and callous. Lord Hastings, the man for whom she had thrown over Henry Chaplin, appeared an odd choice. He had rank and lineage, certainly. Still, he had nothing else to offer, as he was up to his eyes in debt, and his health was far from good. Hence it is not altogether astonishing that very little happiness came to the woman he had induced to elope with him.

There is a theory (unfounded on any acceptable evidence) that “a reformed rake makes the best husband.” At no time, however, could his best friend have described Lord Hastings as “reformed.” Profligate and dissolute prior to his marriage, in the few years that followed it he put less check than ever on himself. His betting transactions were redoubled. Ambitious of coming into prominence as an owner, he also continued to buy horses right and left; and, believing whatever the vendors elected to tell him about them, he soon acquired

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a stud of fifty—good, bad and indifferent. Among these was Kangaroo, which was sold him by a certain Henry Padwick. For this he paid twelve thousand pounds, with a proviso for another five thousand pounds if it won the Derby. The proviso was unnecessary, since Kangaroo while in his possession never won anything. He had been a fair enough horse in his day. But his “day” was long past; and when the astute Padwick got rid of him he was only fit to pull a cab.

This Henry Padwick was a familiar and sinister figure of the 'sixties. The son of a Brighton butcher, he had begun his career as a solicitor's office-boy. But his legal researches did not extend beyond discovering just how far he could go in applying the law to the principles of usury. This was his chief activity; and it was one in which he went very far. Known as “the Spider,” he spun his web in Davies Street, Berkeley Square, where he specialised in making advances to aristocratic minors and embarrassed patricians. Being hard-headed, hard-hearted, and utterly unscrupulous, he soon built up a fortune. Adopting the more impressive patronymic of “Mr. Howard,” he then launched out as a patron of the Turf. Remarkable success met his efforts. Still, this was perhaps inevitable, since his “system” was to buy a horse cheaply from an impoverished owner and sell it dearly to a wealthy one. Some of his purchases were good, but most of them were indifferent. Yet there never was a more “lucky” salesman, and he got rid of three of his stud for twenty-two thousand pounds. He was also said to have been connected with various “jobs” to which the Stewards of the Jockey Club took strong exception. None the less, his bank balance served as a buffer between himself and the whispers of shady transactions. He even sat on the magisterial bench; and before he left this world he had blossomed into a deputy-lieutenant and made his bow at Buckingham Palace.

Lord Hastings is said to have met Padwick through the instrumentality of a certain fair (but sadly frail)

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lady known as "Anonyma," the first wife of a well-known sporting baronet. The author of a sprightly volume of memoirs, *More Uncensored Recollections*, has an interesting account of the "financier's" methods:

"The conspicuous thing about Padwick was that mendacity winked at you from every crease and wrinkle in his face. . . . No one, except a blind man, quite idiotic, very drunk, at midnight in an unlighted cellar would have been deceived by Padwick. . . . Hastings was not a fool; indeed, he had more brains (though, of course, less cunning) than Padwick; but he was absolutely devoid of the least sense of the value of money; and when anyone took the trouble to point out to him—as the late Dean Farrar once did in my presence—how badly he had been swindled, he would only smile, and say with his funny lisp, 'Really, how awful, isn't it?'

"Lord Hastings, as I say, never took the least interest in anything; he would turn his back to the course while a race was being run in which he had a vast sum at stake and calmly scan the crowd of spectators through his field-glasses. It was not pose, nor affectation of any kind, but purely and simply because he was not in the least interested in anything or anybody."

In these circumstances it is not surprising that he came to grief when he fell into the clutches of Henry Padwick (masquerading as "Mr. Howard") and his gang.

Still, he did not always lose. On the Turf, as elsewhere, "beginner's luck" is proverbial; and Lord Hastings, although badly swindled over Kangaroo, had plenty of luck at the start. Thus, in addition to several successes at Ascot, he secured the Cambridgeshire and the Grand Prix de Paris of 1864, and the Goodwood Cup and the Cesarewitch of 1866. Between the years 1864-1867 he won approximately seventy thousand pounds in stakes, as well as a very large additional sum in bets. It would have been a good deal more if certain

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prominent members of the Ring had gone through the formality of sending him the cheques they owed. But this was quite the last idea that entered their heads. However, he took it as a compliment when one of the "Leviathans" of the period, voicing the opinion of his colleagues, observed to him at Ascot, "Heaven has been very good to you, my lord, because you aren't half such a fool as you look."

When they found the man they had regarded as a "mug" winning their money, instead of losing his own, the disappointed pencillers called an indignation meeting.

"This must be stopped," declared their spokesman. "It can't go on. The young toff has had a thousand quid out of me this month."

"Give him his head," urged an experienced member of the fraternity. "We'll get it all back again, and a bit more. See if we don't."

The voice of experience was correct. Encouraged by his temporary triumphs, Lord Hastings plunged as heavily as the Ring could wish and with the results they anticipated. Very soon he was deep in their books. Still, any man who habitually wagers in thousands (especially if he possesses a coronet) always appeals to the mob; and by the hangers-on and riff-raff of the Turf, together with the touts, louts, tipsters, and welshers who battened upon him, this one was regarded as a "hero." He had only to show himself at a meeting to be received with vociferous cheers.

"There he would stand," says a journalist, "smiling at the tumult under his box, a red flower in his button-hole, and his colours round his neck, perfectly cool and unruffled, while 'the talent' made his horse a hot favourite and the knowing ones slipped off to follow his lead."

Well, it was not always an unsuccessful lead, for his Cambridgeshire triumph alone brought him seventy-two thousand pounds. Still, he had so little real knowledge of the art of "making a book" that it was not unusual for him to come out on the wrong side even when he backed a winner.

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5

Although he did not know it at the time, in the spring of 1865 Turf history was made by Henry Chaplin. Having a spare afternoon, he attended a sale, where he saw a yearling whose appearance impressed him. Among the bids that the auctioneer received was one of nine hundred and fifty pounds from Lord Hastings. It might have been knocked down to him when, in response to the question “any advance?”, Mr. Chaplin offered a thousand guineas, and the hammer fell. The horse that he thus secured was Hermit. Anxious to discover if he were likely to be useful, his new owner asked Captain Machell to give an opinion. As Captain Machell, who was very knowledgeable about horses, declared that Hermit was a bargain, it was decided to take a long chance and put him into training for the 1867 Derby.

Lord Hastings, furious at having been outbid by his “rival” (as he persisted in regarding him), took this as a grievance. Having wronged him in one direction, he did his utmost to injure Mr. Chaplin in another. To this end he attempted to belittle his horse with the public by accepting every bet against him that he could induce the Ring to offer. His wife became alarmed, for she felt that if anything went wrong they would be ruined. “Harry is betting like a madman,” she said to a friend. “Do help me to stop him.” But nobody could do this. He met all remonstrances by plunging more deeply than ever; and was at last committed to the extent of nearly a hundred and twenty thousand pounds.

“He betted,” says a man who knew him well, “in such a reckless fashion that not even the Bank of England, backed by the Rothschilds, with the mines of the Transvaal and the buried treasures of Hindustan as additional supports, could have withstood the strain. . . He had absolutely no idea of the value of money, and upon occasion (usually after dinner) his wagers would assume such memorable dimensions as to make even bookmakers blush. . . Nor was betting the only extravagance

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which drained his exchequer, for he was the special mark of the jewellers' touts and other followers of the racing army."

In the meantime Hermit's training was continued under Captain Machell. It was a severe one; and during the course of it he broke down and ruptured a blood vessel. Thereupon Captain Machell, who was himself betting heavily on his prospects for the Derby, got frightened; and, thinking his recovery was impossible, proposed that the horse should be scratched. Custance, the jockey who had been selected to ride him, shared his opinion, and accepted another engagement. Mr. Chaplin, however, would not agree that Hermit's chances were ruined. Instead he secured a fresh jockey and went on with his training.

"We'll see what happens," he said.

His optimism appeared justified, for, in some miraculous fashion, from that moment Hermit began to recover.

The Derby of 22nd May, 1867, was the eighty-eighth to be run. There were thirty starters, the favourite being Vauban, ridden by George Fordham. The prospects of Hermit (whose jockey, John Daley, was quite unknown) were so little fancied by the public that the betting was 100-1 against him. "We would not back him at any price whatever," declared the oracle of the *Sporting Times*. The public had heard of his recent collapse (but not of his recovery), and the general impression was that he would fall down dead during the race. "Everybody considered me a fool," said his owner, "for imagining that he would even finish."

According to the average account, the 1867 Derby was run in a violent snowstorm. This was not the case. It is true that the weather was wretched, with heavy showers of sleet, but there was a comparatively clear interval during the actual race. The starter had considerable difficulty in lining up the field; and nearly an hour elapsed before the flag fell. When they did eventually get off, it looked as if either Mr. Merry's Marks-

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man or the Duke of Beaufort's Vauban would be successful. The mob, indeed, bellowed "Marksman wins!" and Lord Hastings, very confident of the result, nodded triumphantly. Suddenly, however, his confidence left him; and, as the thundering hoofs swept round Tattenham Corner, drawing nearer and nearer the judge's box, his expression altered. Well it might do so, for in that moment a rose-coloured jacket, hemmed in among the first three, shot to the front, and, making a desperate effort, snatched the victory from Marksman by a neck.

Hermit, the despised outsider, had secured the "Blue Riband of the Turf."

6

The dramatic victory of Mr. Chaplin was a staggering blow to Lord Hastings. It hurt his pride and it hurt his pocket. Still, he left the course as if he had not a care in the world as if there was no such a thing as settling-day on the following Monday (when he would have to find more than a hundred thousand pounds), and joined a dinner-party at Richmond.

In a somewhat scurrilous journal, *The Tomahawk*, there was published a caricature of Lord Hastings and his friends driving away from Epsom with Mephistopheles on the box. Accompanying this was the following descriptive paragraph:

"The seats were soon occupied. On the back cushion leaned a youth whose life might have been one series of glories, one grand effort in the cause of his country's good, but who had lost all in losing honour and self-respect. Beside him sat a greasy Jew, with a face that bore a strong family likeness to the weird driver on the box, picking his patron's pocket of his ill-earned gains. Opposite him a vulgar upstart, dressed as a gentleman, with the manners of a coal-heaver, the sensuous lips of a negro, and the heart of a cur."

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Heavily as he was involved, Lord Hastings did not stand alone as a plunger. Those were the days of big betting; and the Duke of Hamilton and the Earl of Stamford lost nearly as much. On the other hand, Mr. Chaplin is said to have won a hundred and forty thousand pounds by his unexpected success, and the astute Captain Machell was sixty thousand pounds to the good. As to Daley's reward for steering Hermit to victory, some preposterous legends were spread. "I am much pleased to announce," wrote an inspired journalist, "that Mr. Chaplin has presented him with seven thousand pounds. Daley is a well-conducted lad. Not only are his manners good, but his general bearing is attractive and agreeably free from the obnoxious flippancy of the modern and much-pampered fashionable jockey. For some time past he has supported his widowed mother and sister."

Although it did not amount to the suggested seven thousand pounds, or anything like it, Daley's guerdon was a substantial one. Bloss the trainer, who, together with Captain Machell, had attended to Hermit's well-being, was also the recipient of a handsome cheque. Nor did Mr. Chaplin's generosity stop there, for, remembering his old friends, he settled the losses of Sir John Astley.

"Put them down to me," he said good-naturedly, when the baronet, who was a "bad loser," grumbled about his ill-luck.

Lord Hastings, of course, had to settle his own losses. To find at short notice the hundred and three thousand pounds that he required for the purpose, and thus avoid being posted as a defaulter at Tattersall's, was a difficult task. It meant selling or pledging nearly everything he possessed, disposing of his Scottish property of Loudon Castle (which was bought from him by Lord Bute) giving up his pack of hounds, and borrowing a considerable sum at exorbitant interest. Still, with the help of solicitors and moneylenders of the Padwick type he managed to meet his liabilities to the Ring. The



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Turf has its own standard of “honour”; and the fact that he did this (instead of seeking the shelter of the bankruptcy court) was held to be so commendable that he was received with enraptured cheers by the mob at Ascot.

But Lord Hastings could never learn a lesson. Having got out of the wood (if only by the skin of his teeth), he promptly found himself in fresh difficulties. With the characteristic optimism of the born gambler, he calculated on winning enough at Newmarket to recoup himself for his Epsom losses. But his plans went badly astray; and as a result of the meeting he was another fifty thousand pounds on the wrong side. In this juncture Lady Hastings took it upon herself to write to Mr. Chaplin. The letter was a piteous one, full of self-reproaches and laments for what might have been. It was answered in sympathetic fashion, and Mr. Chaplin exhibited the fullest consideration towards the man who was still heavily in his debt, suggesting that the amount due to himself should stand over “until convenient,” and adding, “I am only sorry that my success should have been so disastrous to you.”

7

“I hate owing anybody money,” wrote Lord Hastings. Still, he must have got used to it, as he speedily incurred fresh losses. Yet, hard hit as he had been at Epsom, he was extremely lucky at Goodwood and elsewhere. But he made no effort to repay Mr. Chaplin, and very small ones to repay anybody else. Instead he made all sorts of promises. His first proposal was “to find ten thousand pounds immediately and guarantee a similar sum by the end of the year.” He very soon, however, amended this to an offer of a composition of three shillings and sixpence in the pound. When this was indignantly refused he chose to consider himself aggrieved, and to talk of a “scandal.” The real “scandal,” however, was that while, in his mare, Lady Elizabeth (who had won

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eleven out of twelve consecutive engagements), he was the owner of the favourite for the next Derby, he had not settled his debts to a number of men from whom, if Lady Elizabeth were successful, he could demand a large sum. Nor were his creditors much impressed by the fact that “a noble lord who has behaved in the most handsome manner throughout, volunteered to give his joint guarantee with the Marquis and to be responsible for another ten thousand pounds at the end of six months.” Cash down was what they wanted—not promises. They had had too many of them already.

Excuses were found for his failure to keep his repeated promises; and a sporting journal (of which, possibly by a coincidence, Lord Hastings was one of the registered proprietors) published the following:

“The gentleman who has hitherto exerted himself towards effecting a settlement of the Marquis of Hastings’s accounts has had to retire from the contest, owing to so many difficulties being deliberately thrown in his way.”

Badly as a coat of whitewash was wanted, this attempt to furnish one attracted a good deal of caustic criticism. “From first to last,” wrote an angry correspondent, voicing a very general opinion, “the affair has been most discreditable.”

Still, although the liabilities of Lord Hastings were not settled in full, an armistice was arranged, and the melancholy spectacle of a peer of the realm and a member of the Jockey Club being “warned off” as a defaulter was avoided. “The arrangement,” says a chronicler, “for securing this measure of relief was entrusted to a nobleman whom I may, without exaggeration, describe as a thoroughbred diplomatist.” Another authority, however, dubs the anonymous go-between a “professional moneylender.” Possibly this was nearer the truth.

Lord Hastings, for reasons of his own, gave still further offence to the public by striking out his much-fancied

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The Earl a few hours before the Derby. Still, if his other entry, Lady Elizabeth, had done what was expected of her all would have been well, since he had backed her to win a huge sum. Indeed, so heavy were his investments that his principal creditors had offered him twenty thousand pounds for his chance, provided he would undertake to liquidate a proportion of his debts to them. The offer was refused.

“You’ll get your money after the race,” they were told, “not before.”

But so far from winning the 1868 Derby, Lady Elizabeth, with Fordham in the saddle, broke down utterly. As a matter of fact, she finished nearly last in a field of nineteen. This ignominious collapse (coming, as it did, on top of the scratching of The Earl) astonished and angered everybody; and there were whispers that the mare had been “got at.” It was thought that the stewards would assert themselves and that there would be an official enquiry. They decided, however, to take no action. None the less, repercussions followed; and Admiral Rous, that hot-headed old veteran who regarded the Turf as his quarter-deck, lost his temper and lost his judgment. “Lord Hastings,” he declared, in a letter to *The Times*, “has been shamefully deceived.”

In the opinion of this critic, the “deception” practised upon the owner of Lady Elizabeth was that he had not been allowed to see the mare having a trial gallop, but had been assured by the trainer that she was “going like a bird” when she was really broken down. Lord Hastings, however (who, to do him justice, always stood up for anybody he employed), flatly denied the aspersion. “I have,” he wrote, “read with the greatest astonishment a letter which appears in *The Times* of to-day, bearing the signature of Admiral Rous. I can only characterise that letter as a tissue of misrepresentations from first to last. There is no single circumstance mentioned as regards my two horses, Lady Elizabeth and The Earl, correctly stated . . . I trust that this distinct contradiction will induce Admiral Rous to abstain

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in future from publishing statements which he would find to be unfounded if he had previously taken the trouble, or sought an opportunity of verifying them."

John Day, the trainer, and Henry Padwick, the money-lender, whose characters were also aspersed, were equally emphatic, and called upon the Admiral to withdraw his charges. When, with sailorly vehemence, he declined to do so, their respective solicitors got busy, and talk of writs followed.

The action of the Admiral, although well meant, was regarded unfavourably. "His interference," declared one authority, "was in full keeping with his characteristic fondness for censuring others and his zeal for reforming abuses (or what he considered as such) without waiting for proof of any kind." Still, it was perhaps just as well that the matter was not thrashed out in the law courts, for a good deal of very soiled linen would have been washed there, and much of it would have been badly mangled in the process.

8

Hermit's success had been a heavy buffet, but the defeat of Lady Elizabeth was a still heavier one. As a result, Lord Hastings could not settle his liabilities to the Ring; and when he appeared at Ascot the fickle mob, which had applauded him to the echo twelve months earlier, hooted him as a defaulter.

After the Epsom *débâcle* Lord Hastings resigned from the Jockey Club. Yet he appreciated his position so little that he stood as a candidate for the Royal Yacht Squadron. His candidature, however, was unsuccessful. Falling ill, he then left England and went to Norway in search of health. He did not find it there. Instead, he had a mild paralytic stroke, and, returning on crutches, had to be wheeled about in a bath-chair. The ruling passion strong upon him, he insisted, although wrapped in blankets and accompanied by a doctor, on going with the Duke of Beaufort to Newmarket. There he saw a

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mare that had once been his property win a race in the colours of a moneylender. It was at this meeting, too, that he received another reminder of his altered circumstances. Struck by the look of a horse, he offered to back it with a bookmaker who in the past had taken thousands from him. The bookmaker accepted the bet grudgingly. "Well," he said, "I'll take it to oblige you, my lord, but, just remember, if you lose, I expect to have my money."

Warned by his doctors that he could not stand another winter in England, Lord Hastings prepared to go to Egypt for a few months in the autumn of 1868. When, however, the time came to start he had to be brought back from Folkestone, for his health was utterly shattered; and in November of that year he died at his house in Grosvenor Square. He was only twenty-six.

The "King of the Plungers" had made his last bet.

Instead of being taken to the ancestral vault at Donnington and given sepulture there among his forebears he was buried in Kensal Green Cemetery. The funeral service, however, was conducted by the Rector of Donnington, who delivered a homily from a passage in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. His text was the apposite one, "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners."

9

The Turf looms so much larger in the public mind than the Church that it was not astonishing that the death of the Marquis of Hastings attracted much more attention in the Press than did that of the Archbishop of Canterbury, which occurred about the same time. Columns upon columns of obituary notices were published, nearly all of which were of the most vituperative description. In fact, now that he was dead, none of the biographers seemed to have a good word to say for the man they had once bespattered with fulsome adulation.

The customary opening, "We regret to announce,"

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was absent from *The Times* notice, which merely began, "We have to record the death," etc. In a leading article, too, it declared point-blank: "There are some unhappy occasions when it becomes a duty to depart from the charitable rule of saying nothing but good of the dead." Acting on the assumption that this was one of them, the writer indulged in some very severe criticisms: "His personal expenditure was as extravagant as his public gambling, and he was as prodigal of his honour as of his wealth. A lady of great beauty and rank had married him under very extraordinary circumstances; but he seemed to owe no obligations either to morality or to respectability . . . When a peer of high rank drags his dignity in the dirt he stains not only his honour but that of his Order."

"The Spider and the Fly drama is ended," solemnly announced somebody else. "That poor coroneted youth, who had crammed into six years more Corinthian excitement and weightier Turf cares than many 'fast men' know in a lifetime, has laid down his weary load . . . Betting is said to be the touchstone of the Englishman's sincerity, but with the Marquis of Hastings a craving for the odds had really become a disease. He worshipped Chance with all the ardour of a fanatic."

It was left, however, for the sporting journalists (who once had acclaimed him a "hero") to indulge in the most bitter diatribes. Had he robbed a church or been convicted of high treason they could not have been more virulent:

"At the early age of twenty-six, but after a career of unexampled profligacy," declared one of them, "Henry, Marquis of Hastings, sleeps with his fathers . . We have never been admirers of his policy nor sycophantic adulators of his feats of daring. A bevy of flunkeys of the Press were always ready to exchange any amount of dirty work for a few smiles of his favour . . We ourselves have seen nothing to applaud,

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but everything to condemn throughout his brief career on the Turf; and we question whether any man has done more mischief to a noble sport than this sprig of nobility, who, by one of the vultures that prey upon the aristocracy, was designated 'the finest sportsman of this or any other age.' We could perceive nothing 'fine' in his conduct, but much that was coarse and indecently gross. He had no single attribute of a gentleman about him, but abandoned himself to low pursuits and indulged in the filthiest language. It would be difficult to estimate the amount of injury which the sport of racing sustained by his operations, his influence, and his example.

"As an M.F.H., he totally ignored all the recognised rules. Of hounds he knew nothing; of cross-country riding he knew as little. To describe Lord Hastings as a friend of racing would be impossible; and we fully endorse the contention of a leading authority that the Marquis of Hastings was the worst enemy to the Turf he ever recollects."

This torrent of abuse, however, did attract one protest:

"His follies and extravagances have been paraded before the eyes of the curious in nauseating minuteness . . . Surely there ought to be observed some respect, some semblance of feeling for one whose only enemy was himself, and who, after the *exposé* which has recently taken place of his most private affairs, might have been permitted to retire in silence from a scene which he was no longer calculated to adorn . . . The grave which has closed over him, is, if untimely, surely not unhonoured; and we regret, for the sake of his relatives and friends, that a portion of the Press has seen fit to lavish upon him platitudes more appropriate to the denunciation of murder than of extravagance and folly.

"One cannot follow the ups and downs of this unhappy sport of Fortune without comparing the cheers, that everywhere greeted him up to '67, with the

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execrations with which he was assailed by the same rabble at Epsom the following year, and all because one of the most generous of golden calves had been tricked and swindled out of a huge fortune in less than six years and had met every obligation till plucked of his last feather."

The assertion that Lord Hastings had been "plucked of his last feather" was incorrect. He still had some plumage left; and when his will was proved by his executors (an admiral and a moneylender) the personal estate was sworn at ninety thousand pounds. This was more than enough to meet all his outstanding liabilities; and his debts were paid in full and with interest.

The passage of years heals many wounds and softens harsh judgments. It is true that Lord Hastings wrecked his life; but it is equally true that he was in great measure a victim of circumstances. The fact is, he did not start level. He had the handicap of a fatherless and motherless boyhood, added to an impulsive disposition, a colossal income, and a positively childish lack of knowledge as to the value of money. While he had any at his command he was flattered and fawned upon by parasites and sycophants, and told he was a "genius," when he was merely a fool. Further, he was as reckless of consequences and contemptuous of propriety as a Buckingham or a Wharton. With his great opportunities he might have done great things and added fresh laurels to the proud inheritance that had been handed down to him by his forebears. But he wasted his opportunities, as he wasted everything else. Still, he did have one quality that was to his credit. This was an unruffled demeanour whatever happened; and he could lose, as he could win.

"I did not let them see it," he had said, as he drove away from Epsom after the dramatic finish to the Derby of 1867, "but Hermit's win nearly broke my heart."

All said and done, the "King of the Plungers" was not so black as he was painted.

BARON WARD

The “Jockey Minister”

BARON WARD

THE "JOCKEY PREMIER"

I

THE story of Thomas Ward should have been written by Dr. Samuel Smiles. Its "moral lesson" would certainly have appealed to that eminent biographer, for it is the story of an English village boy of humble origin who, by his own unaided efforts and without any natural advantages, rose to be admitted to the direction of a kingdom and to wear the coronet of a baron.

It is true that these distinctions were acquired on foreign soil. Still, they were none the less a tribute to the qualities of their recipient.

A Yorkshire lad by birth, Thomas Ward was born in the year 1809. His parents were poor, but there is every reason to believe that they met the approved combination by also being honest. When his mother died his father married again. As this stepmother set to work and produced a large crop of little brothers and sisters for him, the overcrowding became so serious that at the age of seven young Thomas was sent to live with his grandfather, an agricultural labourer in the adjoining parish of Howden. The old man had no money, but he had "a character for sobriety and uprightness, and was held in much esteem by his superiors."

Thomas Ward appears to have been a quick-witted lad, for at an early age he taught himself to read and write, accomplishments not generally possessed in those days by boys of his position. He also attended the village Sunday school, "where," says an admiring biographer, "having shown himself an apt scholar, he was

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presented by the good clergyman with a Bible. What happiness in the humble cottage that evening, as the gift was proudly exhibited to the occupants!"

At the beginning of the last century child labour was regarded as natural and proper; and small boys of Thomas Ward's class had to turn to and help the family exchequer almost as soon as they were breeched. Accordingly, when he was scarcely twelve this one was put to work in a stable at York, where his father was employed as a groom. The establishment belonged to a Mr. Ridsdale, an owner and trainer of more than local celebrity. In fact, he did a big business in supplying customers abroad with English thoroughbreds; and it was this circumstance that was in after years to set a baron's coronet on the head of Thomas Ward.

It so happened that in the year 1823 Mr. Ridsdale had to send a horse to a wealthy client, Prince von Lichtenstein. As the Prince was living in Budapest, somebody had to travel with the animal from England. Although young Ward was only a lad of fourteen, his master decided that he was a fit and proper person to be entrusted with the business, and despatched him all the way to Hungary. It must have been something of a journey for an inexperienced little boy, unaccustomed to travel and ignorant of any language but broad Yorkshire. Still, he undertook it, and in due time delivered the horse in good condition. Thereupon the Prince was so pleased with the manner in which he had acquitted himself that he offered him a post in his own stables. The youngster, anxious to "see the world," accepted the post. It was the turning point in his career.

Prince von Lichtenstein, being possessed of considerable wealth, had a first-class stud and spent large sums on its upkeep. As a true Yorkshireman, Thomas Ward was knowledgeable about horses. He understood their temperaments, and he could also ride well. The result was, as soon as he learned to speak a little German—a language which he picked up very rapidly—he was given an opportunity of distinguishing himself in the saddle.

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The Prince was a great supporter of the Turf, and, finding that he was honest and not given to betting or gambling, employed his English groom as his jockey. It was a good choice, for he won several races at Vienna.

After he had been with him four years, during which period he gave complete satisfaction, Prince von Lichtenstein, wishing to advance his interests, recommended Ward to a brother nobleman, Charles Louis, Duke of Lucca. The Duke had already met him; and being from the first attracted by his cheerful disposition, good horsemanship and sterling honesty, offered him a situation as head groom. Since this was promotion, the offer was accepted.

With his change of employers Thomas Ward found himself attached to a Court that was, if small, among the most brilliant in Europe. Both the Duke and his Duchess were members of exceptionally distinguished families. Thus the Duke was a son of the last King of Etruria (a province restored in 1809 to Tuscany) and a grandson of Charles IV of Spain; while the Duchess, Maria-Theresa, was a daughter of Victor Emmanuel I, and a sister of the prospective Empress of Austria, "and also held in her own person a general heirship to the Stuart and Tudor dynasties." A man of great wealth (wrung from his overtaxed subjects), the Duke exercised a lavish hospitality; and the leading figures in the worlds of society, art, literature, and diplomacy were welcomed to the Lucca Palace all the year round. "The most considerable personages in Europe," says an historian, "frequented the little capital; and Thomas Ward, whose more than average intelligence was indicated by his acquirement of three foreign languages, heard the volcanic politics of Italy discussed there with a frankness that sometimes comes when the presence of the servants is forgotten." As he followed the admirable rule of keeping his ears open, and his mouth shut, he profited by the experience.

While at Lucca Thomas Ward was not cut off from intercourse with his own countrymen. This was because, attracted by the fame of the baths, combined with the

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cheapness of living, a small British colony happened to be settled permanently in the town. The Duke was fond of the English, and did his best to make their stay in his province agreeable. Nor did he relax his efforts when they could no longer be enjoyed, since, "to mark his appreciation of their conduct, he set aside a picturesque cemetery for the express use of such visitors." The first of them to be accorded sepulture there was Colonel Stisted, an elderly Englishman whose wife, from long residence in the district, was known as the "Queen of the Baths." Since the old gentleman died in Rome, his body had to be brought to Lucca for burial. On arrival at the frontier his widow, in order to avoid difficulties with the Customs authorities, transferred the corpse to a wicker basket, and declared the contents to be "used goods on which no tariff was payable."

During the hot summer months the baths of Lucca attracted many members of the English colony from Florence. Among the regular visitors to this resort (whose praises in earlier days had been sung by Shelley) was Thomas Adolphus Trollope, brother of the novelist. He enjoyed the hospitality of Ward's master on several occasions and had a high opinion of him.

"The Duke of Lucca," he says in his reminiscences, "used to do his utmost to make the baths attractive and agreeable. . . He used to pass every summer there, and give constant very pleasant, though very small, royal balls at his villa. . . His 'policy,' I take it, was pretty well confined to the endeavour to make his sovereignty as little troublesome to himself, or to anybody else, as possible. His subjects were very lightly taxed, for his private property rendered him perfectly independent of them."

Those were easy-going days; and Duke Charles, while waiting to step into the shoes of the Archduchess Maria-Louisa and administer the more important realm of Parma (to which throne he was heir), spent much of his time amid the pleasanter surroundings of the Court of Vienna. Being a great-grandson of Maria-Theresa, he

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naturally looked upon his brother-in-law, the Emperor, as his political chief; and instinctively turned to Austria for help and advice during anxious periods of unrest in his own dominions. Such periods were of frequent occurrence.

Thomas Ward always accompanied his master on these journeys, and “won golden opinions by reason of his thoroughly English air and manner.” These qualities were rated high; and before long they led to their possessor being advanced from the stables to the anteroom. Within a couple of years he found himself appointed to the more responsible position of valet. But he did not stop there, for by degrees the Duke promoted him to a situation that was not far removed from that of private secretary, and also began to consult him on matters of politics. This would suggest that the choice of trustworthy advisers at the Lucca Court was somewhat limited, for, taking them all round, the ex-groom’s qualifications to act as such seemed moderate.

“He had,” says Sir Bernard Burke, who met him in England, “no personal advantages whatever, being quite devoid of that showy exterior which sometimes leads to promotion in great houses. He was undersized and by no means well made, except for riding; his face was plain, but had an expression in which there was a remarkable union of simplicity and shrewdness. His complexion was light, his eyes were quick, grey and penetrating. He was thoroughly English in his air and manner, and in nothing more than in his extreme neatness of dress and cleanliness of person.”

The year 1838 was a momentous one for Thomas Ward. He began it by accompanying the Duke to Milan, where the Emperor of Austria was crowned King of Lombardy. His next visit was to London, in the suite of his master, who had been invited as the guest of the British Government to attend the coronation of the young Queen

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Victoria. While in England he filled the role allotted him with complete satisfaction, and was present (but, of course, in the background) at many ceremonial gatherings. "He must," says an impressed biographer, "during that period have seen at an awful distance some of those illustrious notabilities with whom it was his fate in after years to mingle in diplomatic life."

Sovereigns of petty states are, when travelling abroad, given to standing somewhat on their dignity. The Duke of Lucca was no exception. Thus, during this visit to England he complained to Count Pollon, his Ambassador, of an alleged breach of etiquette. The Ambassador wrote to Lord Palmerston on the subject, and Palmerston forwarded the letter to the Queen, together with a covering one from himself. "The Duke of Lucca," he said, "has a notion that Sovereign Princes who have had the honour of dining with your Majesty have always been invited by note, and not by card. If that should be so, and if your Majesty should invite the Duke to dine at the Palace before his departure, perhaps the invitation might be made by note instead of by card, as it was when the Duke last dined at the Palace. Your Majesty may think this a small matter, but the Duke is a small Sovereign."

"Half a Sovereign," was how he was said to have put it to other people.

Still, if injured, the Duke's *amour propre* was not seriously damaged, for he paid a week-end visit to Windsor Castle and was also a guest at several country houses. He then, together with his suite, returned to Austria.

Where "Signor Tommasso," as the Italians called the English groom, was concerned, this journey back to Vienna was in strong contrast to the one he had made fifteen years earlier. Then he had travelled in a horse-box, a poor and friendless little boy. Now he was a man of some consequence, with a position that brought him into close touch with a sovereign prince and, although nominally still a valet, exercised a good deal of power.

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He was behind the scenes, but he pulled strings to some effect.

On returning to Vienna Thomas Ward assumed a fresh responsibility. He became a married man, his bride being Louisa Genthner, "a young woman of excellent character, but of humble position." Their stay in the Austrian capital, however, was not prolonged, for his master suddenly received a strong hint that the sooner he settled down at Lucca and took an active hand in the government of that province the better.

The Duke, being weak-willed, and frankly pleasure-loving, was very much under the thumb of his ministers. As many of them were corrupt and utterly unscrupulous, they had taken advantage of him during his prolonged absence, and the whole province was seething with dissatisfaction. In despair of finding a member of his Cabinet whom he could trust, he began to consult Thomas Ward, at first privately, and then openly. As, when it was adopted, the valet's counsel always had good results and was so clearly disinterested, the Duke placed more and more reliance on him. Still, this did not turn his head, and "while at the summit of his master's regard no individual ever heard a boast fall from his sensible lips." Yet he had something of which to boast, for the next thing that happened was that he found himself appointed keeper of the privy purse. The experiment was a daring one. Still, it was thoroughly justified, since, to a natural gift for finance, he added a punctilious honesty, a combination somewhat rare at the Lucca Court.

On taking up his new post the first thing that its occupant did was to investigate in thorough fashion the economic system of the Duchy. It was as well that he did so, for he discovered that the official in charge had been feathering his nest to such an extent that the ducal revenues were seriously impoverished. The treasury was

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almost empty; and in order to avert immediate bankruptcy it was imperative to dismiss a powerful minister and a number of corrupt assistants. As his weak-willed master shrank from the responsibility of adopting such a step and would not stir a finger, Thomas Ward consulted the Duchess, and put the position before her. To his relief she showed herself prepared to grapple with the situation. As it called for prompt action, she decided to invite the help of her uncle, the Archduke Ferdinand, Governor of Galicia.

But the task of enlisting his sympathetic interest was one of extreme delicacy, since it had to be kept from the knowledge of her husband; and, if conducted without tact or in a bungling fashion, the situation would become worse instead of better. The only individual she could trust to enlighten her relative was Thomas Ward himself. He accepted the commission, and set off on the long journey to Galicia. Having reached Lemberg (not without adventure, for he was stopped by bandits at the frontier), he saw the Archduke and extracted a promise from him to come to Lucca and put the finances there in thorough order. The promise was kept; and the Duke was so overjoyed at the part played by his henchman that he offered him the portfolio of a Cabinet Minister. But Thomas Ward begged to be excused, declaring that he was "an obscure foreigner, happier in the stables than hobnobbing with the quality."

Still, his unwillingness to accept advancement was overcome when, shortly afterwards, he was offered the appointment of Master of the Horse. In this capacity he attended one day a review of the local troops. They were handled in such clumsy fashion by their general that the Duke called upon Ward to drill them. As a result he added the direction of military affairs to his other activities and became a sort of additional Commander-in-Chief. According to Lord Lamington, he was specially qualified for the post by reason of having served six years in the Yorkshire Yeomanry. This, however, can scarcely have been the case, since he had left England

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as a small boy of fourteen. Yeomanry recruits were accepted young, but not quite so young as this.

With the passage of time it became clear that the increasing responsibilities of the Duke's body-servant (for, officially, he still held this post) rendered it imperative that, whatever his private view on the subject, he should join the Cabinet. Under renewed pressure, he yielded to the wishes of his master and took up the portfolio of Minister of Finance. Having given way on this point, he gave way on another, and also accepted elevation to the peerage as Baron Ward.

To sustain his enhanced dignity it was necessary that the Baron should have a coat of arms. Since his own family had never possessed such an equipment, one was specially devised for him by the Duke himself. This consisted of the Cross of Savoy and the Lily of Bourbon, "supported by English John Bulls," with the motto, *Sagaciter, Fideliter, Constanter*, beneath the escutcheon.

In heraldic language the design read: "On a field gules a cross argent, in the dexter chief a shield azure surmounted by a royal crown, and charged with a fleur-de-lis or; supporters, two bulls reguardent proper." The *Burke's Peerage* of his day also allotted him a niche; but, as he had never abandoned his nationality, he was entered there among the "Foreign Noblemen subject to the British Crown."

Yorkshiremen are proverbially clannish; and as he rose in the world Thomas Ward never forgot the claims of his humble relatives in England. Although he had a wife and children of his own, as soon as he felt his prospects permitted it he made generous gifts to his father and grandfather, settling weekly allowances upon them. He also adopted a young nephew, for whom he procured a commission in the Austrian Army.

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The death, in 1847, of the Archduchess Maria-Louisa had far-flung effects, and set the map-makers busily at work. While in those unenlightened days there was no League of Nations to assert itself, the politicians at Vienna were more than a match for anything that Geneva has since produced; and, with that large-heartedness that has always characterised the “Powers,” they cut up other peoples’ property and distributed it among those whom they favoured. Accordingly, they decided that Tuscany, having once been despoiled of Etruria, should now be fobbed off with Lucca; that Lucca should have Parma; and that Parma—being of no particular consequence, should have nothing—except a sovereign whom she did not want. Thus were dynasties evolved in the chancelleries. For anybody who protested—well, a prison was always yawning.

Parma’s new monarch was the Duke of Lucca, who now became a Prince. As, in accordance with the provisions of the Congress of Vienna, this change involved the transfer of Lucca to Tuscany, and of Fivizzano to Modena, various diplomatic problems had to be settled, and Baron Ward was sent to Florence to deal with them. So many opposing interests were concerned that the matter was an exceedingly delicate one. It was also complicated by the fact that the business had been badly bungled by a number of amateurs to whom it had been entrusted in the preliminary stages. But the ex-groom showed himself as knowledgeable about diplomacy as he was about horses. He knew when to be firm; and, what was still more important, he knew when to yield. The result was that, although pitted against some of the sharpest intellects—the flower of the chancelleries—none of them could get the better of him; and before he left the council chambers he even secured an undertaking that the Grand Duke of Tuscany should contribute the substantial sum of forty-eight thousand pounds a year to the revenues of the Prince of Parma.

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Adolphus Trollope, who made it his business to know everybody in Italian diplomatic circles, knew Thomas Ward; and about this period he invited him to a dinner-party in Florence, at which Sir Henry Bulwer (Secretary of Legation) was also present.

“One of our guests,” he writes, “was that extraordinary man, Baron Ward, who was, or perhaps I ought to say at the time had been, Prime Minister and personal administrator to the Duke of Lucca. Ward had been originally brought from Yorkshire to be an assistant in the ducal stables. There, doubtless because he knew more about the business than anybody else concerned with it, he soon became chief. In that capacity he made himself so acceptable to the Duke that he was taken from the stables to be his Highness’s personal attendant. His excellence in that position soon enlarged his duties to those of controller of the whole ducal household. And thence, by degrees that were more imperceptible in the case of such a government than they would have been in a large and more regularly-administered state, Ward became the recognised and nearly all-powerful head, manager, and ruler of the little Duchy of Lucca. And I believe the strange promotion was much for the advantage of the Duke and the Duke’s subjects. Ward, I take it, never robbed him nor anyone else. And this eccentric speciality, the Duke, though he was no Solomon, had the wit to discover.”

After this encomium it is distinctly odd to find Trollope adding (but without furnishing the smallest proof for it) the following statement:

“In his cups the ex-groom, ex-valet was not reticent about his sovereign master, and his talk was not altogether of an edifying nature. . . . Ward got very drunk that night; and we deemed it fortunate that our diplomatist guest had departed before the outward signs of his condition became manifest.”

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If the truth were known, it would probably turn out to be Trollope who had too much to drink.

In characteristic fashion, Baron Ward took no credit to himself for thus beating the other diplomatists at their own game.

“It is God’s work alone,” he says in a letter on the subject to his father in England, “and I am a mere instrument that He has been pleased to make use of. He has given me sufficient good sense to discern the vanity of this world, so that, although placed in a most extraordinary position for one of my origin, it is no burden to me. Think of a boy taken from school in the ninth year of his age and put in a stable; and then see him occupied with the affairs of Europe and concluding treaties. Must not this be the work of God? Most certainly it is His work.”

In a second letter, written from Florence, he elaborated this theory:

“I have had many changes in my life, wonderful changes for a man of my humble education. When I last returned from England the whole of the Duke’s administration was confided to me. I was successful, and everything went well. Afterwards a very serious question arose between the Duke of Lucca and the Grand Duke of Tuscany. This lasted for two years; and ended in a very disagreeable manner by the Grand Duke making a public protest. I, as Councillor and Minister of State, was at that time head of the finance department. Our Minister of Foreign Affairs, who had been conducting this business, relinquished it, as impossible to do anything more with it. My indefatigable spirit would not allow me to see such a cowardly withdrawal, and at my request it was confided to me. I was laughed at by all when I took it in hand. Some said I was presumptuous; some said I was a fool; and some said I was an ignorant fellow. I

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let them all have their talk, and to work I went. This was my first step as a diplomatist."

Although the first one it was by no means the last step which the Baron took in this direction, and within a few weeks he was called upon to act as mediator between Austria, Modena, and Tuscany; to negotiate three separate treaties; to settle the terms of a Customs Union; and to raise a public loan.

As may be imagined, the discharge of these various and Mussolini-like activities kept him fully occupied. There were periods when he seems to have felt the burden of them. "I have done nothing," he wrote, "but travel about from one Court to another. I have four secretaries and ten writers at this present moment here in Florence . . . I shall retire if possible. I have had enough of this life. They will finish me with fatigue. I have not had a moment's rest, and have much to fear for my health. I really feel I cannot go on this way much longer."

But, so far from giving it up, he undertook still more work, carrying with it a step in diplomatic rank, and in 1848 he went to Spain as Ambassador-Extraordinary. From Madrid he proceeded to Vienna, to offer Francis-Joseph the prescribed compliments on his accession as Emperor of Austria. These missions brought him the customary shower of gewgaws in the way of "decorations," and his embroidered coat glittered with "Collars" and "Stars" and "Orders." But he took little stock of them. "I am always afraid," was his shrewd comment, "when I have to go up one step higher, since there is then further to fall. As for titles and honours, I really do not know what to make of them. They are of no use, except for a show, such as a Court ball, and this comes seldom."

A pronounced Absolutist by conviction, and unsparing in advancing the interests and wishes of his master (who, in his eyes, could do no wrong), Thomas Ward wanted nothing for himself. "He was," says a biographer, "utterly devoid of personal ambition. Thus,

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he concluded treaties and brushed clothes; complimented Sovereigns and decorated Princes; and discharged the duties of viceroy or valet with similar dignity and self-respect.” Nor did he care anything about society. In fact, he made a point of refusing to mix with the Luchesse nobility except when summoned to a council; and, while offered apartments in the palace, he preferred to live in a modest little house with his Viennese wife and children. Although the courtiers often affected to sneer at him as a “lackey,” and dubbed him (among themselves) the “jockey minister,” he was head and shoulders above them all in knowledge and ability. His colleagues’ ignorance on general subjects was almost incredible. “What is the Queen of England’s name?” he was once asked when a despatch had to be prepared. “Is it Christina or is it Vittoria?”; and on another occasion a high official blandly enquired if Dublin was in Scotland?

5

In 1848, and for some years afterwards, political affairs from one end of Europe to the other were so involved that it is difficult to disentangle them. A spark kindled far afield will set vast tracks aflame. The Revolution in France, which brought about the downfall of Louis Philippe, had its inevitable repercussions elsewhere. In Vienna the once mighty Metternich was overthrown by the mob, and the dramatic crash of that champion of Absolutism echoed throughout Italy. As a result, Piedmont and the northern provinces were caught up in the maelstrom that had started in the south; and Parma, Lucca, and Modena were soon embroiled. But this, perhaps, was inevitable, for it had not occurred to the dynasty-makers that the Tuscans would object to ceding Fivizzano to Modena. But they upset all calculations by objecting. They objected very strongly, and at the point of the sword.

The Duke of Modena had Austria behind him; and Austria answered his appeal by sending Marshal Ra-

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detzky with a phalanx of bayonets to take up a strategic position in the Quadrilateral. The Pope attempted to meet the situation by publishing an allocution. From the balcony of the Quirinal he informed the populace that "God would bless Italy." As, however, he did not specify which portion would be "blessed," the assurance fell a little flat. Nor did the Constitution sanctioned by his Holiness have much effect, since there were already three other Constitutions, none of which seemed productive of any real good. Flame and fire ran through the kingdom, and Radetzky fell back upon his base.

This was the opportunity of Carlo Alberto, King of Sardinia (and, incidentally, King of Jerusalem). He had always cherished a hope of expelling Austria from Italy; and in his dreams he now saw himself wearing the Iron Crown of Lombardy. That nobody ever did see him wearing it is a matter of history. Still, there were "demonstrations," from which he derived encouragement, and, as a result, he mobilised the Sardinian Army. The British Minister at Turin, together with his Prussian and Russian colleagues, voiced a strong protest. Carlo Alberto, however, considered himself pledged to "go forwards." Where he finally went was backwards. All his grand schemes collapsed; and instead of establishing himself in Lombardy he had to withdraw to Piedmont.

These various happenings were watched with much interest in England. Lord Palmerston, whose policy was largely governed by what the Italian exiles in London chose to tell him, sent Lord Minto as Ambassador to the Papal Court. The choice was an odd one. "He exhibited," says the author of *The History of the Italian Revolution*, "a sublime disregard for diplomatic formalities. He seemed to think that it was quite a natural thing for an ambassador to be in open relation with men who were well known to be the bitterest foes of the government to which he was accredited. . . The only result of his mission was materially to increase the agitation at Rome and to help prepare the way for the outbreak of 1848."

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Charles McFarlane, the historian who pronounced this opinion, may have been prejudiced. Still, as in addition to being a resident in Italy of many years standing he also happened to be a Presbyterian elder, he is not likely to have been biassed towards an Ultra-montane government.

6

When, in the historic spring of 1848, the Duke of Lucca succeeded to the Throne of Parma that edifice was already a tottering one. Cavour had long had a covetous eye on it; and the efforts engineered from a distance by Carlo Alberto of Sardinia were already afoot to undermine the Duke's position there. Baron Ward, who, despite his work as a diplomatist, could never divest himself of his Yorkshire habit of plain-speaking, complained openly of the "infamous intrigues of the King of Sardinia." Whether "infamous," or not, they were undoubtedly questionable; and British sympathy—as voiced by Palmerston—was at first strongly on the side of Austria. Cavour, on the other hand, proved a stumbling-block. He objected to all independent states and to all Italian dukes. He had not a good word for any of them. As a natural result the ground-swell of discontent rumbled in all directions. Everybody was dissatisfied. Some of the Parmensi wanted a republic; some of them wanted annexation to Tuscany. There was only one point on which everybody was agreed. This was that they did not want Charles Louis of Lucca as Sovereign. Nor, as it happened, had he himself any real desire to wield the sceptre. Since he was a Bourbon, it must have occurred to him that a throne, wherever situated, offered no security of tenure to any member of his House. In pusillanimous fashion he decided that the best method of avoiding the troubles that threatened him was to run away from them. Accompanied by Baron Ward (who, although offered a handsome bribe by Leopold of Tuscany to remain at the helm in Parma, refused to desert his bene-

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factor), he left Italy and fled to Weistropp, near Dresden, where he had a château. There he settled down to follow “the tranquil life of an elegant scholar and country gentleman, diversified by occasional intercourse with the royal family of Saxony.”

Before shaking the dust of Parma off his shoes the Baron had some brisk passages with the Regency that had been established there. When the provisional government, whose members he dubbed a “horrid lot,” found that he positively declined to have anything to do with them they began to talk of reprisals. To their annoyance, however, he stood on his rights as an Englishman and claimed the protection of the British Minister, Sir George Hamilton. This was forthcoming, and he was permitted to stop in Genoa until he elected to leave the country of his own accord. “I was thus enabled,” he says, “to snatch the Duke from their power; and by doing so I embarrassed their whole policy. . . . Had Radetzky recovered this time, my battle would have been most glorious. I bothered Piedmont with English interference to such a degree that my passports were handed me.”

If Thomas Ward had at this period of his career been naturalised things would undoubtedly have gone hard with him, and he would almost certainly have been imprisoned or shot as a rebel. But he had always clung to his birthright. One reason was that he had taken the measure of the Duke’s subjects from the first, and his opinion of them was unflattering. “I have lived fifteen years constantly among the Italians,” he wrote, “and I am sorry to say that out of thousands of so-called friends not one turned out in the day of trouble. . . . I hope that the Duke will benefit by this lesson, for, of all that numerous herd of courtiers fed by him, none came forward to share their fate with him.”

During the absence of their legitimate Sovereign things quietened down somewhat in Parma. Still, it was not long before the citizens of that principality began to feel that Charles Louis, with all his faults, was an im-

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provement on Carlo Alberto and his pack of cut-throat Sardinians who had replaced him. The result was they made overtures to Austria; and in the spring of 1849 Radetzky returned with an army corps, and, having driven the invaders from the province, re-established the ducal government. Charles Louis, however, had no desire, even under Austrian protection, to wield the sceptre that was handed back to him. He much preferred the comparative tranquillity he was enjoying at Weistropp to anything that Parma and its tinsel Court could offer. Still, as somebody had to sit on the Throne there, he handed it over voluntarily to his son Charles.

Thus, in effect, Baron Ward. A somewhat different version, however, is given by a second student of Italian politics at this period, John Webb Probyn. As he had no axe to grind or princely interests to serve, a measure of importance attaches to his opinion:

“In the neighbouring little Duchy of Lucca, not then united to Tuscany, Duke Charles Louis, after bitterly opposing all reforms, gave way at last to the wishes of his subjects, when unable any longer to withstand them. There he went so far as to adopt the Italian tricolour flag, which neither the Pope nor the Grand Duke had consented to do up to this time. His subjects believed for the moment in this sudden conversion of Duke Charles, and gave him an ovation; but he secretly left his Duchy, sold his rights over it to Leopold of Tuscany, and for a time disappeared from public life. When the reaction triumphed he reappeared as Duke of Parma, its Duchess, Maria-Louisa, having died; and there he ruled by the grace of Austria as one of her most tyrannical lieutenants.”

The decision of the Duke to abdicate in favour of his son Charles fell as a bombshell on his henchman Thomas Ward, who, unaware of what was portending, had resumed the Premiership. Although he considered the step an error of judgment he resolved to make the best of it, and applied himself loyally to the business of

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establishing Charles III in the position his father had abandoned. As there was no time to lose, he hurried off to Vienna, where he found himself confronted by Radetzky and Schwarzenberg, each of whom was determined to drive a good bargain for their Emperor. Although, in comparison with them, he was a novice, he managed to hold his own against the pair, telling Prince Schwarzenberg (doubtless, much to that imperious individual's astonishment) that "Albion's sons are unfamiliar with any language but that of honour." Smacking, as it did, of the rhetoric of the Elephant and Castle, this fustian none the less caused the Prince to yield. As for the Emperor, he was so struck by the visitor's astute handling of a difficult situation that he conferred on him an Austrian title of nobility, and the "Jockey Minister" went back to Parma as Freiherr von Ward.

Charles III, who, by an unexpected turn of Fortune's wheel (plus the help of Thomas Ward), thus found himself installed as a Sovereign Prince, had none of the graces of his father. On the contrary, he was merely an ill-conditioned, loutish young man, overbearing, tyrannical, and voluptuous. Pietro Orsi, the Venetian historian, declares him to be "a good type of a medieval tyrant, arbitrary, dissolute, ignorant and vicious;" and Armigo Solmi puts him down as "an abandoned libertine, who imitated the dress and habits of Pier Luigi Farnese, of evil memory." Yet, notwithstanding these drawbacks, he had made a brilliant marriage, for his wife, being a daughter of the Duc de Berri, and a sister of the Comte de Chambord, represented the Capetian and Bourbon dynasties of France.

Before actually ascending the throne the Prince, together with the Princess, took the opportunity of visiting England, where they spent several weeks in the autumn of 1848. During this visit he was accompanied by Baron Ward, who was attached to his suite in a diplomatic capacity. Ten years earlier the Baron had, as a humble valet, gone to England in the train of the Duke

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of Lucca. Now he travelled there as a Cabinet Minister. Palmerston, who happened to meet him in London, was much struck with his ability, as also was Metternich, who had found a refuge in Brighton. Prince Charles, however, made a less favourable impression. "A mad-cap," was the verdict of Sir Horace Rumbold. "Nor was he wanting in wit of a coarser kind." And "a despotic voluptuary, who hated democrats and patriots, and all people of culture," was another uncomplimentary opinion.

From London the Prince went to Scotland, to stay with the Marquis of Douglas in the island of Arran, and afterwards at Bolsover Castle as a guest of the Duke of Buccleuch. Being fond of hunting, he attended several meets. His ideas as to horsemanship, however, were a little odd, for, to the astonishment of the M.F.H., he always insisted on dismounting at every obstacle and having openings made for him in the hedges by a groom.

7

The abdication of his old friend and patron, the Duke of Lucca, whose fortunes he had followed for five-and-twenty years, was a bitter blow to Thomas Ward. He accepted it, however, as inevitable, and now served Charles III with the same fidelity he had given Charles II. As Prime Minister he had a difficult position; and there were moments when he felt inclined to abandon it. "If," he once said, "I can find the man to my fancy, I shall step back and place him in my shoes. . . I am so sick and disgusted that I shall be most happy to withdraw and attend to the welfare of my family."

Apparently, however, no such individual presented himself, for Baron Ward remained at the helm. But, as the youthful Sovereign did not always see eye to eye with him, he was accredited to the Court of Vienna as Minister Plenipotentiary, while continuing to discharge the duties of Premier. The step, which was none of Ward's choosing, was an ill-judged one. Also, it brought terrible

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consequences in its train. It was bad enough, the Parmensi decided, to be governed by a foreigner, in the interests of a foreign dynasty, but the position was much worse when that foreigner was not even living among them. Their smouldering anger was further fed by the imposition of ever-increasing taxes. They drew up a list of their grievances and petitioned the Prince to adjust them. His action in flatly refusing them any redress was to cost him dear. In fact, it was to cost him his life, for at last one of the citizens, voicing the general feeling, went so far as to plunge a stiletto in his ribs.

“The Duke of Parma,” said the first hurried account, “has been assassinated in his capital in circumstances of so little repute that they have been intentionally obscured or repressed. It is reported that the deed was perpetrated during a vulgar brawl in a pot-house.” The obituary notices that followed were anything but flattering. Thus, one of them began: “The reign of this unworthy Prince has been a continual period of misrule. He squandered the public moneys to any extent and at any time it suited his purpose. His private life was as shamefully profligate and low-lived as it was derogatory to his official position.” What was declared to be a “characteristic example” was also given. According to this, he had pocketed three million francs voted for the construction of a railway and spent them on doubtful pleasures in Paris.

The name of the assassin was common property. As, however, public opinion held that his action was to the general good and had removed an incubus of the worst type, no attempt was made to bring him to justice.

Although the widowed Duchess had, during his lifetime, been abominably treated by her husband, she managed to discover an unsuspected fount of virtue in him after his death. She even issued a public proclamation, in which she referred to him as “Our well-beloved Consort,” and added (but on no acceptable evidence) “Whom Almighty God has been pleased to call to Himself.”

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The assassination of the Duke of Parma, which occurred in 1854, after a reign of less than five years, had repercussions where Baron Ward was concerned. If his position had hitherto been insecure, it was now shattered utterly, for the first act of the widowed Princess (who became regent on behalf of her infant son) was to dismiss him from office. As an excuse for this drastic step a rumour was spread that he had contemplated seizing the Throne for himself. The rumour was unfounded. Yet the Princess elected to credit it, and also banished him from her dominions.

It is a matter of history that this act of ingratitude towards the Englishman to whom she owed everything recoiled upon herself. Six years later the Duchy was annexed by Victor Emmanuel and her son Robert was driven into exile. Yet at the moment she found apologists. "In inaugurating her regency with such vigour," declared M. Nettlement, "she answered the cry of the public conscience, which demanded such a change of administration."

There were, however, others who did not hear this "cry." Some of them said so. "Unless," wrote one who took Ward's part, "we are prepared to accept as facts a chain of the wildest improbabilities, we must rest content with the conclusion that he was a loyal and devoted servant, endowed with native abilities of a high order, and we must set down his dismissal as an act of shortsighted folly and black ingratitude. He was on the wrong side; or, at any rate, on the losing side. But he toiled for his master with a single-hearted devotion that is beyond praise; and he received in return the reward that the Stuarts and Bourbons have mostly reserved for their faithful servants."

But what people said, one way or the other, did not trouble Thomas Ward. Being something of a philosopher, he took his dismissal with the equanimity he had always maintained. As a matter of fact it is probable that he rather welcomed it than otherwise. He was a tired man; and the atmosphere of courts, combined with the

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imbroglio of Italian politics in which he had lived so long, was really foreign to his nature. The moment he felt himself free he purchased a farm on the outskirts of Vienna, where he settled down with his wife and family. "Well it was for him," says a pious chronicler, "that he had not staked all his happiness on the approval of courtiers, but had ever kept the fireside of home warmed by the loves of his heart. This, then, was his cherished retreat from the splendid cares of office; this was his abundant solace in exile."

But the "abundant solace" was not his for long. In 1858 the Englishman who, twenty-five years earlier, had come to Vienna as a stable-boy, and during the interval had risen to an ambassadorship and a peerage, died there at the age of forty-nine.

8

As was, perhaps, only to be expected, there was a remarkable difference of opinion as to the real character and achievements of Thomas Ward. Thus, while several of his fellow diplomatists have hinted that he was far from scrupulous when advancing any cause he had at heart, he has also been the subject of absurdly fulsome and gushing biographical sketches. That he had an aptitude for intrigue is beyond question. Yet with this he combined an astonishing simplicity. Despite, too, his undoubted sincerity of purpose, there was a strong touch of self-complacency—if not of positive smugness—in his composition. "Though humble," he says in one of his letters, "God has lifted me above many thousands that sneered upon me. But He has likewise blessed me with a noble mind"; and in a second, he remarks: "I feel the comfort of having done my duty and acted entirely in accordance with my conscience."

Lord Lamington, who knew him personally, describes Baron Ward as "one of the cleverest diplomatists, financiers, and ministers of the day." Speaking of his appointment as Master of the Horse, he adds: "Ward at this

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time had not been associated with gentlemen; but after his promotion he astonished the Court of Parma by the facility with which he acquired courtly manners. . . . The finances of Parma were in a deplorable state, and but a short time elapsed before Ward was Finance Minister, when, what with reductions and reconstructions, there was a material improvement in the revenue. So here he was at the head of every department. Never was such a rise, except in the Opera of *La Grande Duchesse*. And, strange to say, with all this he was not unpopular. . . . It was as Baron Ward he came to England as Minister, where the Yorkshire groom found himself the object of general interest. Lord Palmerston had the highest opinion of him, and thought him one of the most remarkable men of the age. He possessed the tact not to be thrown off his balance by his rapid elevation, and to retain, even if he did not cultivate, his simple, sometimes even uncouth, manner."

Still, if he had his admirers, Baron Ward also had his detractors. Everybody did not see eye to eye with him; and there were whispers that some of his administrative methods were distinctly questionable. But these whispers were for the most part born of jealousy. Officials entrusted with the handling of public funds are much the same all the world over; and there were a number of them in Lucca and Parma who objected to being prevented from feathering their own nests by anybody, and more especially by a foreigner. What chiefly annoyed them about this one seems to have been his share in arranging the transfer of Lucca to Tuscany, and securing a good bargain for the Duke to whose interests he was devoted and in whose actions he could admit no wrong.

"Having exhausted all other means of raising cash for the pleasures of his master," declared one furious critic (in whose lexicon the apopthegm, *de mortuis*, etc., had no place) "the infamous Ward did not scruple to sell Lucca outright to Tuscany." His humble origin was held to be another grievance. He was often called (but behind his back) the "Jockey Minister"; and a sneering

BARON WARD

passage on the subject is to be found in Carlo Massei's "Storia Civile di Lucca":

L'inglese Ward, uomo dell' ultima classe del popolo, venuto in Italia con alcuni cavalli in qualita di palafroniere, e como tale serri in certe alcuni anni.

A rough translation of this would read: "The Englishman, Ward, a man of the very lowest class, came to Italy with some horses, in the capacity of groom, and was employed as such for some years at Court."

The truth about Baron Ward lies probably where it generally does—somewhere midway between these extremes. Still, taking him all round, Thomas Ward, whatever his faults, had qualities that set him immensely above the average man. He started at the very bottom of the ladder. It was by his own exertions that he reached the top. Stable-boy, jockey, groom, valet, ambassador, premier, and baron—all within the compass of less than forty years. Such a record has no parallel.

FIFTH MARQUIS OF WATERFORD
The Shadow on Curraghmore

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THE SHADOW ON CURRAGHMORE

I

At seven o'clock in the morning of 23rd October, 1895, a shot rang out in the library at Curraghmore, near Waterford. The walls were thick, and nobody seems to have heard it. Entering the room, however, a few minutes later, a startled housemaid discovered, stretched in a huddled heap on the carpet, a still-smoking gun beside him, the dead body of the Marquis of Waterford. A coroner's inquest followed, when a verdict of "temporary insanity" was returned.

In this tragic fashion ended, at the age of 51, the life of a man of exceptional ability, zeal, and influence. It was also the culmination of a drama that had begun twenty-six years earlier.

2

If ever there were a favourite of fortune it was John Henry de la Poer Beresford, fifth Marquis of Waterford. High birth, good looks, a great position, a large income on which to support it, and the love of women were all showered upon him. The head of an illustrious house, and one with which the history of Ireland is inseparably connected, he was born in 1844. On leaving Eton, where he distinguished himself more in the playing-fields than in the class-rooms, he was, at the age of eighteen, gazetted a cornet in the First Life Guards. Those were the days of quick promotion for young officers of "family." The result was the Earl of Tyrone,

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as he was then known, reached the rank of lieut.-colonel after only seven years' service. Nor were his military duties (distributed between London and Windsor) over-exacting, since, on being elected M.P. for Waterford, they did not prevent his sitting in the House of Commons.

The young soldier took his politics seriously; and it was always a matter of regret to him that, in 1866, on succeeding his father as fifth Marquis, he had to leave the Commons for the Lords. From the first he developed an interest in the Irish Land question, on which subject he soon became an admitted authority. In order to devote more time to it and also to attend to the management of his ancestral estates, he resigned his commission and settled down at Curraghmore. There he identified himself with various activities, serving as lord-lieutenant of the county and honorary colonel of the militia artillery, and spending such leisure as remained in hunting and shooting. Although less fond of racing than his brothers, he established the Curraghmore Hunt Steeplechase, a fixture which proved very popular. He also took over the mastership of the Curraghmore hounds, and hunted the county himself. Things were done by him in the "grand manner"; and a princely establishment was kept up, with sixty couples in the kennels and fifty horses in the stables. Popular with the tenantry, his hounds were made welcome and foxes were preserved.

All seemed set fair. None the less, clouds were gathering. During the early summer of 1869 they burst with shattering effect; and as a result Lord Waterford found it advisable to leave Ireland for the time being.

A guarded reference to the subject appeared in the columns of a local paper:

"We regret to learn that, owing to a recent deplorable event that has occurred elsewhere, the establishment of the Marquis of Waterford at Curraghmore House will necessarily be broken up. As a result all the domestics employed there have, with the exception



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of two, received an intimation that their services are no longer required. The prolonged absence of a respected nobleman who has been accustomed to pass so much of his time at the family residence will be felt seriously in the south of Ireland."

This mysterious allusion was to something that was happening in London, where the stage was being set for a drama in which the head of Curraghmore was to play a leading role.

3

On an April morning in the year 1869 Captain the Hon. John Vivian, Junior Lord of the Treasury in the Gladstone Administration, sat staring at an anonymous letter. It was the second he had received within a brief period.

It is all very well to say (especially by those who have never had such missives) that anonymous letters should be put in the fire and their contents ignored. But this is a counsel of perfection that it is often difficult, if not impossible, to follow. The temptation to do otherwise is much too strong. Captain Vivian succumbed to it. He read the letters and he acted on them. As it happened, he had no choice, for they struck at his honour and impugned the fidelity of his wife. Not only this, but they gave the fullest details. Even then their recipient might have treated them with contempt, had they not been accompanied by two other letters which sustained the charges up to the hilt.

One such letter was from Mrs. Vivian herself; and the other had been written to her by the man whom, until that moment, Captain Vivian had always regarded as his closest friend.

That man was the Marquis of Waterford.

The second son of the first Baron Vivian, the Hon. John Vivian, had held the rank of captain in the 11th Hussars. Having political ambitions, he had retired

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from the Army to enter Parliament as M.P. for Truro; and in 1868 he was appointed Junior Lord of the Treasury by Mr. Gladstone. As a widower, he had married, in 1861, Florence Rowley, daughter of an officer in the East India Company's forces.

At first the marriage appeared to promise well. Three children were born, and the husband and wife were looked upon as a devoted couple. But the harmony was only on the surface. Underneath it there was discord. The root of the domestic trouble was, perhaps, that Mrs. Vivian took no interest in politics, and Captain Vivian took no interest in anything else. Mrs. Vivian was fond of amusement and society, of balls and theatres. She found no pleasure in listening to speeches or acting as hostess at the dull dinner-parties which her husband insisted on giving to his supporters and official colleagues. Then, too, she had very little in common with the elderly and somewhat strait-laced Dowager Countess of Kin-noull, with whom they shared a house in Belgrave Square. The Dowager was Scotch and "serious." Mrs. Vivian was neither, and her opinions often clashed with those of the older woman.

It was in 1863 that Captain Vivian first made the acquaintance of the Earl of Tyrone, then a youth of nineteen, and just gazetted to the Household Cavalry. The acquaintance rapidly developed into one of warm friendship. Captain Vivian, who was considerably his senior, looked upon himself as the younger man's political sponsor, and as such he presided at a dinner that was given to celebrate his election to Parliament.

With Mrs. Vivian, who happened to be some years older than himself, the new Member was also on the most cordial terms. She was an attractive woman, and, flattered perhaps by the interest she took in him, the young officer was glad to accompany her to the opera and a succession of concerts and balls, and the round of "the season," when her husband, immersed in his ministerial duties, was "too busy" for such relaxations. He was in

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her drawing-room constantly; and lunched and dined and supped with her several times a week.

In those mid-Victorian days the standards were somewhat rigid; and a married woman could not accept masculine attentions (from anybody but her lawful spouse) without laying herself open to criticism. Such criticism was forthcoming from several people, and in particular from the Dowager Countess of Kinnoull, with whom the Vivians were then living. "Lookers-on see most of the game"; and the Countess was disturbed by much that she saw. At last she spoke to Captain Vivian, and dropped a hint to the effect that the "friendship" between his wife and Lord Tyrone was becoming closer than their respective positions warranted. Captain Vivian, very sure of himself, did not exactly tell the old lady to "mind her own business," but he met her expositations by leaving her house and setting up an establishment in Lowndes Street. To show still further that he attached no importance to what had been said, he made a point of encouraging Lord Tyrone to call more frequently than ever.

When Lord Tyrone succeeded to the marquise and was transferred to the Upper House the intimacy was continued, and the Vivians were invited to stay with him at Curraghmore. As showing the terms existing between the two men, Captain Vivian was "My dear Johnny" to his host; and in one letter to him he was declared to be "My oldest and best friend." There were also letters from the Marquis to Mrs. Vivian. But these were couched in terms of which her husband had at the moment no knowledge.

That knowledge was to come to Captain Vivian through the medium of the anonymous individual who had sent him the letters in the spring of 1869. How they got into this person's hands has never been explained. The presumption, however, is that they were purloined from their original owner by a dismissed servant.

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As soon as he had recovered from the shock of the discovery thus forced upon him Captain Vivian taxed his wife with her infidelity. Confronted by the evidence of her own letters, she admitted the charges. There was nothing else to do.

“I love Lord Waterford,” she said. “He is everything to me.”

The next move was with Mrs. Vivian. Her action was, in the circumstances, a very natural one. She went straight to Lord Waterford, and, telling him that their *liaison* was discovered, appealed to his chivalry to stand by her. She did not appeal in vain. Without stopping to count the cost, Lord Waterford offered the full measure of his protection to the woman who, for his sake, was giving up husband, home and children. In less than an hour his plans were completed. That night the couple left London for Paris.

The wretched husband, fearful lest his political as well as his domestic future should be imperilled, strained every nerve to hush up the threatened scandal. But his most desperate efforts were to be of no purpose. Mayfair is always a whispering-gallery; and the matter had gone too far to be hushed up. In a few hours the story of Mrs. Vivian’s flight with her lover was common talk. From drawing-rooms and clubs it spread—with a thousand embellishments—to tap-rooms and servants’ halls. Then “the worst” happened. It “got into the papers”; and paragraphs, headed “Elopement in High Life,” began to appear.

With his hand thus forced, Captain Vivian adopted the measures that, in such circumstances, have come to be regarded as normal. He employed that stock figure of domestic drama, a private detective, to follow the couple. Since they had gone off in the most open fashion, the agent had no difficulty in tracing them to their Paris hotel, the Westminster. On learning this, Captain Vivian also went to Paris, taking with him his

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sister-in-law, Emily Knight, as he considered that she had some influence over his wife.

Mrs. Knight saw her sister, and, declaring that the threatened scandal could still be avoided, endeavoured to persuade her to return, if only for the sake of her young children. Having extracted a half-promise from her to this effect, she then had an interview with Lord Waterford. He was quite ready to repair, so far as possible, the wrong he had done Captain Vivian. The difficulty, however, was Mrs. Vivian. She was reckless and in love—an unfortunate combination.

During his stay in Paris Captain Vivian stopped at the Grand Hotel. Much to his surprise, Mrs. Vivian called there to see him. What passed between them at the momentous interview is unknown. When, however, after a long discussion Mrs. Vivian, weeping and hysterical, left to return to the Westminster, it was on the understanding that she would put her decision in writing.

Late that evening, while he was waiting in an agony of impatience, the answer was brought round to Captain Vivian by a special messenger. From the first few words, blotted with tears and erasures, he saw that all his hopes were shattered:

“I cannot go back with you. I have tried and tried to give him up; and, against his own urgent wish, I shall stop with him. For God’s sake, don’t think too badly of me; and don’t let anybody come near me, or I shall do myself some harm. I will write to Emily. I cannot see her. I am going to my ruin, I know, but it is impossible for me to go back now. Try and forgive me in your heart. I could not look at those poor children after what I have done. Do not send for me, for heaven’s sake.—“FLORENCE.”

The next morning Mrs. Knight went to see her sister again and made another appeal. Captain Vivian, she said, had no wish to divorce her. On the contrary, he was still willing to take her back to London. With a

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wealth of worldly experience, she also pointed out that the man for whom she had left her husband was several years younger than herself, and that the entire Beresford family would resist to the last any marriage between them.

But it was all to no purpose. The appeal fell on deaf ears. Mrs. Vivian had worked herself up into a state of "nerves," and flatly refused to leave Lord Waterford.

"I love him," she declared, "and he loves me. It is wicked to try to separate us."

When her sister pointed out that Lord Waterford, who had wisely gone to another hotel until the wretched business should be settled, could not be pledged, it had no effect.

5

Captain Vivian had done his utmost, and failed. There being nothing more to do, he returned to London and consulted his solicitors. Advised by them, he presented a petition, asking for the dissolution of his marriage on the grounds of his wife's misconduct with Lord Waterford. Both the respondent and the co-respondent filed answers, traversing the allegations. At the beginning of August the case was put down in the list.

The *Morning Post* report of the proceedings occupied one and a half lines: a model of sub-editorial condensation, though somewhat lacking in detail. At any rate, the other London papers seemed to think so, for they printed columns upon columns.

A scurrilous journal, *The Queen's Messenger*, which (until he was outlawed for committing perjury) was conducted by Grenville Murray, had a long article on the subject. It was full of characteristic mis-statements. To give himself a loophole, however, and to avoid being prosecuted for contempt, the editor referred to Lord Waterford and Captain Vivian as the "Marquis of Gutterford" and "Mr. Trivial."

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Among the least offensive passages were the following:

“The circumstances of the case are peculiar. It seems that for some time past the lady in question has been mentioned in connection with the Marquis, and that her disappearance was not unexpected. She left her home, alleging that she was going to see her mother, and that she would return the same evening. As she failed to appear, the husband, who seems unaccountably to have known the road she had taken, went to Victoria Station, and there ascertained that she had left for Paris with her noble friend and a companion. He followed them, and when the unhappy woman locked the door against him, he obtained assistance and burst it open. Thereupon she took poison; not enough to produce death, but enough to escape question. The husband offered her secrecy and a free pardon if she would come back to him; but she firmly refused to do so, and he returned home for reasons only known to himself without facing the man who had broken up his home.

“ . . . Mr. Trivial, the injured husband, at least aspired to be a statesman, and is a colleague of persons in grave esteem. What had he or his family to do with an Irish Marquis fresh from a cavalry mess-room? What band of common interest or sympathy ought to have existed between them? Lord Gutterford had no ideas, but he had much money. His visits, his horses, his carriages, his servants, his presents, must have attracted attention and excited remark. His calls must have been frequent and long, to persuade a wife to abandon her legitimate guardian, and the mother of four young children to leave her home.

“ . . . Why did a husband of mature years, knowing that he had a giddy young wife, tolerate such a nuisance? The conduct of all the parties in this scandalous adventure is of the oddest and most incomprehensible

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kind. The fugitives ostentatiously left their address for the pursuer at Victoria Station—surely a very Irish proceeding. The injured husband, having followed and overtaken the ravisher, did not venture to confront him, and returned wholly unavenged, which is a very unusual end to such a drama, and one in accordance with neither poetic nor moral justice.

“So dull a tale of vice and folly would have no interest for the public, and would be a most improper subject for newspaper comment, were it not that it behoves all thoughtful Englishmen steadily to remember the fact that the Marquis of Gutterford, although an avowed adulterer, is, nevertheless, an hereditary legislator, who sits as a Peer of Parliament, and who makes and unmakes the laws under which we live; and, moreover, that the same gentleman who was unable to govern his own family is a Member of the House of Commons, and receives a thousand a year as a Lord of our National Treasury.”

To the obvious annoyance of Grenville Murray, this blackguardism was not held to be worth powder and shot by either of the parties concerned. Instead, they felt that if only he were given enough rope, himself and his wretched sheet would come to a natural end before much more time had elapsed. They were correct in thinking so, as, on being prosecuted for a gross libel on Lord Carrington, he fled the country three months later.

The Vivian divorce action was set down for hearing in August 1869. It was heard by Lord Penzance, sitting without a jury. Money being “no object,” each side briefed a big array of distinguished counsel. Thus, Captain Vivian had the services of Sir John Coleridge (Solicitor-General) and Mr. Prentice Q.C.; Mrs. Vivian was championed by Dr. Spinks, Q.C.; and Lord Waterford secured Sir John Karslake (ex-Attorney-General) and Dr. Tristram.

Sir John Coleridge, being (as is the custom among

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“fashionable” leaders) unable to appear, the petitioner’s case was put by Mr. Prentice. According to him, Captain and Mrs. Vivian had lived happily together during the first eight years of their married life. It was through her husband that Mrs. Vivian had met Lord Waterford. Captain Vivian had trusted him, and Lord Waterford had betrayed his trust. A common enough happening, and one not restricted to any special circle of society. That, in substance, was the case which, learned counsel submitted, entitled the petitioner to relief.

Mr. Prentice, in referring to the co-respondent, was badly instructed, or else he had not read his brief properly, since he declared him to be “a young man of twenty-five or twenty-six” at the date of his first meeting with Mrs. Vivian. As a matter of fact, he was then scarcely nineteen. For this reason his family, led by his uncle, Colonel Leslie, took up the standpoint that he had been “victimised”; and that the lady’s husband had, for purposes of his own, deliberately engineered the intrigue. Lord Waterford, however, refused to fall in with any such theory. He did not even want to defend the case; and it was only the pressure put upon him by his relatives, coupled with a chivalrous resolve to stand by the woman whose conduct was challenged, that had induced him to brief counsel.

To the obvious annoyance of the public, who had filled the galleries on that hot August afternoon, hoping to hear scandalous details, the letters which Lord Waterford and Mrs. Vivian had written to one another were not disclosed. Captain Vivian’s counsel wanted to read them, but the other side, quoting precedents from the text-books, protested that they were “not admissible.” The Judge agreed with this view. Thereupon Mr. Prentice gave way, feeling that Mrs. Vivian’s written confession to her husband was enough for his purpose.

With the exception of Henry Smith, the private detective, who had found Lord Waterford and the respondent living together in Paris, the Dowager Countess of Kin-noull was practically the only other witness to be called.

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She did not have much to say. Still, what she did say certainly helped to establish the injury suffered by the petitioner.

“I have known Captain and Mrs. Vivian for several years,” she said, in the witness-box, “and I was present at their marriage in 1861. This took place at St. Paul’s, Knightsbridge. As I had a large house, they lived with me in Belgrave Square. This arrangement continued until last summer, when Captain Vivian, having three children, and wanting an establishment of his own nearer his work, moved to Lowndes Street.”

“On what terms,” she was asked, “were Captain Vivian and his wife during the period they lived with you?”

“So far as I could see they were always on the most affectionate terms. In fact, I considered them a devoted couple.”

“Was Lord Waterford a frequent visitor?”

“He was a constant visitor; first at my house and afterwards in Lowndes Street.”

“And did you ever observe anything to indicate misconduct between himself and Mrs. Vivian?”

“At no time did I do so,” was the emphatic answer.

Another effort was then made by the petitioner’s counsel to have the letters which had come into Captain Vivian’s possession read in court. Sir John Karslake, on behalf of Lord Waterford, repeated his objection to this being done. As, however, he declared, “I will not deny that my client was the man who stopped at the Hotel Westminster with Mrs. Vivian in Paris,” Mr. Prentice did not think it worth while to pursue the subject, and the letters were withdrawn.

This episode concluded the case. In giving his decision Lord Penzance did not consider it incumbent upon him to deliver a long harangue. A bare dozen words were enough for his purpose:

“The adultery,” he said, “is plainly proved. I pronounce a decree *nisi* with costs against the co-respondent”.

The granting of a decree *nisi* is one thing; the making



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of it absolute is another. This latter step was vigorously opposed by the Beresford family, who did not wish Mrs. Vivian to become a member of it, even with a wedding-ring on her finger. Indeed, Lord Waterford's uncle, Colonel Charles Leslie, felt so strongly about this that he took it upon himself to file a series of affidavits, alleging that material facts had been suppressed by Captain Vivian; and instructed his solicitors to prepare a petition, asking the Queen's Proctor to intervene. That authority, however, having examined the affidavits, declined to move; and Colonel Leslie, yielding to the inevitable, withdrew his application. Thereupon the Solicitor-General urged that he should be condemned in the costs of the action. The Judge, however, with obvious reluctance decided that this could not be done, "although," he remarked, "Colonel Leslie's interference is unwarranted, and has occasioned unnecessary delay. I am very glad," he added, "that the Queen's Proctor, having had time to conduct a full enquiry into these charges, holds that there is no ground for his intervention, and that the assertion that the petitioner is entitled to a decree absolute is fully justified. I now pronounce that decree."

But all this took up several months; and it was not until the following year that Captain Vivian was granted his freedom.

Notwithstanding the continued endeavours of his relatives to keep them apart, Lord Waterford, the moment he could do so, made Mrs. Vivian his wife. Their union, however, was not destined to be a long one; and within a year the woman on whose account he had been dragged through the divorce court and his name smirched, died, after giving birth to a still-born infant.

The bereaved husband only remained a widower for twelve months. At the end of that period he embarked upon a second venture in matrimony. This time it was

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one that fully commended itself to his relatives, his bride being Lady Blanche Somerset, daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Beaufort. The wedding took place at Badminton, the service being conducted by a bishop, and the best man was his brother, Lord Charles Beresford. After the honeymoon the newly-married pair went to Ireland. There they were given a hearty welcome by the Curraghmore tenants; and a public banquet, followed by much toast-drinking and speech-making, was held in the town-hall.

A typically florid description of the home-coming appeared in the columns of a local journal:

“Yesterday afternoon there was no small stir and bustle in the old City of Waterford on the occasion of presenting the Marquis of Waterford with a congratulatory address in honour of his first visit to us since his marriage to Lady Blanche Somerset. Flags were exhibited in the streets, and triumphal arches erected at various points, while many hundreds of the inhabitants assembled along the line of route and loudly cheered the noble pair as they drove up to the town-hall.”

Where his second marriage was concerned Lord Waterford had certainly made a wise choice. The new Marchioness had a charm of manner that endeared her to everybody with whom she came into contact. Added to this she was a sportswoman, and hunting was to her as second nature. She rode admirably; and from her experience with the buff and blue of the Badminton was able to help her husband in his duties as M.F.H. That he took these, and all his other activities, seriously is indicated by a paragraph (accompanying the inevitable cartoon of himself) which was published in *Vanity Fair*:

“The Marquis of Waterford represents the sober sense and steady judgment of the family. . . . He likes the Irish, and he is regarded by his tenantry and all the people who dwell in these parts as the great man of

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Waterford. He is a man of much information, of excellent judgment, and of so much sobriety and staidness of demeanour that nobody who did not know it could suspect him to be the elder brother of Bill and Charlie."

It is significant that this appeared ten years after, and not before, the Mrs. Vivian episode.

There, was also a "biographical sketch" in *B's Monthly Magazine*:

"He has gone through the usual curriculum, was educated at Eton, and got his commission in the First Life Guards. . . . He is a bold rider, always with the pack, rides eighteen stone; and, last but not least, levies no subscription. Deservedly popular as a landlord, as well as a Master of Hounds, Lord Waterford at Curraghmore plays the part of a country gentleman with all its duties and pursuits. He is one of the Vice-Presidents, specially chosen to represent Ireland, of that admirable institution, the Hunt Servants' Benefit Society; and, we believe, takes great interest in its progress and welfare."

One reason of Lord Waterford's popularity was that, unlike so many other property-owners in Ireland, he was not an "absentee landlord." All his real interests were at Curraghmore. "The management of his estate, his hounds, his horses and his hunting," says one who knew him, "had such an attraction for him that he made a point of spending nine or ten months out of the year there. The Marchioness also preferred her Irish home to any other place. A lavish hospitality was practised by both of them, and Curraghmore was constantly full of guests. As a result the district benefited from the annual expenditure of a large sum on the upkeep of the hounds and the employment of labour.

For several years in succession all went well. But the good relations between the Hunt and the tenant farmers were not proof against the insidious workings of the Land League; and in 1881 a number of unruly individuals,

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armed with stones and pitchforks, suddenly appeared and made an unprovoked attack upon the hounds and their followers. Perhaps the worst feature of the occurrence was that the riff-raff forming the mob were all strangers to the district, and thus had no sort of interest in the coverts that were being drawn. It was clear, however, that they had accomplices among the peasantry, as warning bells (the customary tocsin on such occasions) were rung at different points to signal the line of country that was being ridden over.

Lord Waterford met this gesture very promptly and in characteristic fashion. Calling a meeting of all the members of the Hunt, he announced his intention of resigning the mastership. In doing so he offered to hand over the pack to any successor appointed by his hearers, and also to subscribe five hundred pounds a year towards their upkeep. Until the necessary arrangements could be completed several couples of hounds were lent by him to Lord Lonsdale, M.F.H. of the North Pytchley.

7

Rather than give up altogether the hunting to which he was devoted, Lord Waterford took his horses from Ireland to Leicestershire, where he leased Quenby Hall. It was while out with the Cottesmore, one day in the spring of 1885, that he met with the accident which, ten years later, was to be indirectly responsible for his death. Hounds were running freely, and Lord Waterford, who was a big, heavy man and rode eighteen stone galloped at a half-open gate, which, in Leicestershire fashion, was propped up with a stick. Just as he drew alongside a sheep, rushing out of a hedge, knocked it down, and Lord Waterford, unable to pull up, crashed into the post. The collision was so violent that he was dragged from the saddle with one leg entangled in the upper bar. To the surprise and relief of the onlookers, however, who all imagined he was killed, he remounted and continued the run as if nothing serious had happened.

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That evening he delivered a political speech at a meeting in support of Lord John Manners, and he also went out with the Belvoir and the Quorn on the two following days. Although he appeared, by a miracle, to have escaped with nothing worse than a shaking he began to be conscious of an increasing numbness in his legs. As this developed and he found a difficulty in gripping the saddle, he consulted a medical man. It was then discovered that he had injured the nerves of the spinal column.

As the doctor who first examined him did not take a very serious view of the case, it was hoped that the injury would yield to treatment and that his recovery would be rapid. Instead, however, of getting better, Lord Waterford's condition got steadily worse, and grave symptoms manifested themselves. He had to spend six months in bed; and when he left his bed it was to move to a sofa, where he stopped for the next five years. At intervals he suffered paroxysms of pain, lasting for two or three weeks at a time; and also had to endure a number of surgical operations.

From the saddle to the sofa and an invalid's chair. To a man of Lord Waterford's active disposition and love of sport such an existence was little better than a living death. But he met the blow that had befallen him with characteristic and high courage. Although he was seldom free from pain, and had every reason to believe that he would be crippled for life, he set a gallant example. He devoted himself to furthering village industries and the management of his affairs; and wherever he happened to be—even when travelling abroad with his wife and children—he arranged that daily returns of the incomings and outgoings on his property should be submitted to him.

He also maintained his interest in political matters, and was regular in his attendance at Westminster, where, on account of his physical disability, he was allowed to address the House while seated. He spoke there often, especially on the rejection of the Home Rule Bill. But for his crippled condition, he would probably have be-

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come leader of the Unionist Party in Ireland and have held office under the Salisbury administration. As it was, a few months prior to his accident he had been appointed Master of the Buckhounds. Until his resignation was accepted the duties of the office were carried out by his brother, Lord Charles Beresford.

Eminently fair-minded as he was, it was only natural that Lord Waterford should hold a brief for his own class and advocate their interests through thick and thin. Still, he always put his arguments with a measure of moderation that secured for him an attentive hearing from his opponents. The trouble was, he neglected to realise that he himself was an individual, and not a typical, landed proprietor, and that too many of his class adopted a narrower view of their responsibilities towards their tenants.

Although one of the biggest property-owners in Ireland and chairman of the Landlords' Committee, his real sympathies were with the tenant class, and he did much to promote the Labourers' Act. Naturally enough, everybody did not see eye to eye with him, and he had several sharp encounters with John Morley over the Irish Land Bill. Sir Algernon West, who knew them both, felt it a pity that there should be any misunderstanding between them. Accordingly he resolved to bring them together, and gave a dinner party for the purpose. "Most successful," is an entry in his diary. "Waterford and John Morley talking Ireland all dinner-time and after. They agreed on many points and spoke very frankly and openly."

"I took," says Lord Morley, in his *Recollections* "a great fancy to him; fine, open, manly, observant, knowing one side of the Irish ground thoroughly. The best specimen of a dominant caste—the old masterful Irishman—but seeing that his power is gone, or as good as gone."

The result of this chance encounter was that Lord Waterford invited the Chief Secretary to be his guest at Curraghmore and to see for himself what the real

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position was there. Glad of the opportunity, Morley went and saw and was conquered, as, much to his surprise, the tenants, so far from being at daggers drawn with him, were on the best terms with their landlord. Noticing that one member of a deputation was particularly demonstrative in his welcome, he enquired who he was.

“He happens,” was the answer, “to be an evicted tenant on this estate.”

As a result of this visit the Chief Secretary’s mind was disabused of a long-fixed impression that nothing but the most deadly antagonism existed between landlords and tenants throughout the country. On returning to Dublin he wrote to a friend:

“I had had a delightful and wonderful visit. . . I liked Lord Waterford as well as I did when I last met him in London. He has a thoroughly able, direct, frank, masculine mind, and with a good deal of liberality and breadth of apprehension. They say he is of a dictatorial mind. Perhaps; I don’t know. It does not prevent him from being a man of strong, clear sense, and hearty, straight ways. We talked Ireland in and out, up and down, hour after hour—Land Question, Home Rule, Catholic and Protestant . . . I should never desire to meet a more acute, frank, manly disputant . . . I felt the value of hearing the landlord view put at its best by the man who is far the ablest in that camp . . . As I forged ahead in the train and boat through the night I found myself often thinking of the house I had left, with the shadow of tribulation heavy upon it, and of the frank, manly, strong-headed and strong-hearted master of the house, and of all that we talked about together.”

Lord Waterford’s interests were not limited to agrarian matters. Always in advance of his time, he was a staunch supporter of the Bill to remove the then existing restrictions against marriage with a deceased wife’s sister. His championship of the measure was so strong that on a certain Oaks Day he had himself driven

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to Epsom, where he canvassed his brother peers on the Downs, to ensure their attendance at a division that night. His success in persuading many of them to give up dinner and theatre parties for this purpose was a tribute to his personal popularity, since it is not every body who can tear hereditary legislators from the path of amusement to that of duty.

As the years went by Lord Waterford, after submitting to several operations, got so much better that he was able to leave his invalid chair, and walk a couple of miles. A prospect was even held out by the doctors that in time he would fully recover the use of his legs. But this was not to be. One day as he was dressing he tripped over a rug and fell heavily to the ground. The result was to undo all the good effect of the surgical treatment he had undergone and make his condition worse than ever. All his hopes were shattered; and he saw himself doomed to drag out a wretched existence as a cripple. This circumstance, accompanied by a return of intense pain, plunged him into a depth of depression. He battled with it long and valiantly. But the struggle was unequal; and on an October morning in 1895 he ended it by his own act.

8

When the news was first received of Lord Waterford's death there were widespread manifestations of sorrow and sympathy from all over the Kingdom. Telegrams of enquiry were sent by the Queen, the Prince and Princess of Wales, the Duke and Duchess of York, and many others. Until the tragedy was fully investigated it was suggested that he was handling a gun which he did not know to be loaded, and that as a result of stumbling against this it went off, lodging a bullet in his forehead. While the theory was ingenious, the facts that were elicited at the coroner's inquest that followed made it an impossible one to accept.

The inquest was held at Curraghmore the next morn-

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ing, when all the circumstances of the tragedy were examined by the coroner for the county. The first witness was a housemaid. A little after seven o'clock, she said, she met Lord Waterford going from the library to his bedroom. Having dusted the library, she went downstairs, leaving the door open. On returning a few minutes later to fetch something she had forgotten, she found the bedroom empty and the library door shut. As she could get no answer when she knocked, she, together with another maid, entered the room. There she saw Lord Waterford lying on the carpet near the window. Thinking that he had perhaps fallen in a fit, she called the valet. This man, James Bone, having gone in to see what had happened, then consulted with the butler. The pair acted in a sensible fashion. Leaving the butler to calm the frightened maids and break the news to his mistress, the valet locked the door, and, putting the key in his pocket, hurried off to fetch medical assistance.

“I found his lordship,” he said, “lying against a cupboard, with a double-barrelled gun at his side. For two or three weeks he had suffered great pain from his injured back. He was often in terrible agony. Last Monday, however, he had told me that he was feeling much better.”

“What did you do?” enquired a juror.

“When I saw that his lordship was dead, I called the butler. I told him that the room should be kept locked, and nobody allowed in it, while I fetched the doctor and the police-inspector.”

“Did you hear the discharge of a gun?”

“No,” was the answer. “None of us heard anything unusual.”

Doctor Staunton, who had been summoned by the valet, was the next witness.

“When,” he said, “I was told that Lord Waterford had shot himself, I asked District-Inspector Penrose to follow me as soon as he could, and rode at once to Curraghmore. On entering the study there I saw his

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lordship lying on the floor, with his back to a cupboard, a bullet wound in his head and a gun beside him. Death must have been instantaneous. His lordship was wearing a night-shirt and dressing-gown. During the period I have acted as his medical attendant I have had many opportunities of seeing him. For a part of this time I have lived at Curraghmore, and also on board his yacht and at his London house. As a result of the old injury to his spine he must have suffered great pain."

"Was this pain severe enough," asked the coroner, "to make him lose his self-control?"

"Yes, I think it was. The paroxysms would have had this effect. He was perfectly sound in his mind, but he often had fits of depression that lasted for several hours."

The only other witness to be called was District-Inspector Penrose, of the Royal Irish Constabulary. He corroborated the account given by the doctor of the finding of Lord Waterford's body. The gun, he said, had recently been discharged, and the stock was broken, as if some heavy object had fallen on it.

"How was it that nobody heard the report?" enquired a juryman.

"The servants were in another part of the house at the time, and the walls of the room where this happened are very thick."

The coroner summed up briefly, and then left it to the jury to bring in their verdict. The one they returned was, in all the circumstances, inevitable:

"We find that the deceased, John Henry de la Poer, Marquis of Waterford, was, on the 23rd of October, 1895, in his business room at Curraghmore, wounded by a gunshot discharged by himself during temporary insanity, and there died."

The funeral, which took place the next day at Clondegam, was attended by a representative gathering of all classes, with peers and peasants, landowners and labourers, standing round the grave. The coffin, covered

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with wreaths—among them being one from the Prince of Wales (“As a mark of sincere friendship and regard”) and another from the Emperor of Germany—was followed by the dead man’s secretary, farm-steward, forester, gamekeeper, gardener, and huntsman, acting as pall-bearers.

¶ The shadow on Curraghmore continued. The Marchioness of Waterford, left a widow under such tragic circumstances at the age of thirty-nine, was herself already smitten with a malignant disease, and one from which there was no hope of recovery. Yet, with womanly and patient fortitude, she had, until forbidden by the doctors, always been active in helping the many charitable causes in which she was interested. She did not survive her husband long, for she followed him to the grave within two years.

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